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CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
I	PREPARING FOR THE START	9
II	THE ALLIES' GREAT TASK	19
III	A BATTLESHIP IN ACTION	28
IV	ASSEMBLING OF A MIGHTY FLEET	43
V	"WAITING FOR THE SIGNAL"	55
VI	THE STORY OF THE LANDING	62
VII	FUTILE TURKISH ATTACKS ON COLONIAL TROOPS	82
VIII	SEDDUL BAHR LANDING	88
IX	THE FIRST STAGE—IMPREGNABLE POSITION	102
X	FURIOUS ATTACKS ON AKI BABA MOUNTAIN	109
XI	DESPERATE ATTACK ON COLONIAL TROOPS	128
XII	GRAPHIC STORY OF BRITISH HEROISM	136
XIII	THE GULLY RAVINE	145
XIV	PRODIGAL WASTE OF LIFE	153
XV	BATTLE OF JULY 12–13	158

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ASHMEAD-BARTLETT'S DESPATCHES FROM THE DARDANELLES

CHAPTER I

PREPARING FOR THE START

April 8

MALTA has played many great rôles in the history of Europe. "The little rock of Malta," says Gibbon, "defies the Turkish power, and has emerged under the government of its military order into fame and opulence." On June 10, 1798, the island which the eagle eye of Napoleon had discerned before starting on his expedition for Egypt as "La place la plus forte de l'Europe," passed into the hands of the French. Their occupation was, however, brief, and the expedition to Egypt having failed, on September 4, 1800, General Vaubois, who had been left in command, surrendered to General Pigot, who commanded the British and Allied forces. These events of over 100 years ago have a most important bearing on the present operations of the Allies against the Dardanelles. Malta has remained ever since our principal dockyard and arsenal in the Eastern Mediterranean, and when General Pigot took over the island, on September 4, 1800, all unknown to himself he was making possible and practical the present operations against the Turkish empire.

Little could any one have dreamt in the year 1800 that a century later a combined English and French Expeditionary Force would be using the famous island as its base. The importance of Malta cannot be over-

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estimated. Both the English and French fleets and transports are based on it—over 100 French ships and an even larger number of British. All supplies, munitions and ammunition are drawn from its arsenals; to it damaged ships retire to be docked and repaired; the wounded find accommodation in its spacious hospitals; and it is the port of call for all transports on their way to Egypt and the islands. Happy, indeed, is the nation which has complete command of the sea. It was the unfulfilled dream of the Great Napoleon to make the Mediterranean "a French lake." His dream has half come true. At the present moment, when Europe is ablaze, the Mediterranean is a French and English lake. The enemies of the Triple Entente have been absolutely swept from this highway to Egypt and the East. It is almost as safe now for unarmed merchantmen, transports, colliers and warships as it is in times of peace. The smallest and slowest vessels pass up and down it unmolested, without any escort. The Austrian fleet lies securely bottled up in the Adriatic, watched day and night by the latest and most powerful vessels of the French navy.

No German Warships

There is not a single German warship on the high seas. Once an English vessel has left the radius of submarine activity around our shores, and finds herself in the Bay of Biscay, she can continue her journey practically in safety to Malta, to the Dardanelles, Egypt, or on to the Far East. Such is the strength of the Allies at sea, and such an ascendancy have they established over their enemies, that whilst Sir John Jellicoe and the Grand Fleet is blockading the German coast, and whilst the French are bottling up the Austrian fleet in the Adriatic, practically the whole of our powerful pre-Dreadnought

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squadrons are free to attack the Dardanelles and to assist the French and English armies to open the iron gate which leads to Constantinople.

Having travelled overland viâ Rome, I reached Syracuse on March 31, to find an Italian steamer leaving the same evening for Malta. In Italy I found such conflicting views as to Italy's attitude in the near future that I finally was glad to abandon any further attempts to solve the problem and was happy to escape to actualities. But there is an interesting point which seems to have escaped the notice of many which may yet act as a powerful inducement to the Italians openly to throw in their lot with the Allies. In Syracuse I found ten powerful German and Austrian steamers interned. I am told that the principal Italian ports are full of Austrian and German steamers which have been lying idle ever since the declaration of war. Now, if Italy declares war, all these vessels will be given forty-eight hours' notice to clear out. I do not suppose many will even make an effort to get away, as they are stranded between the devil and the deep sea, so to speak, and even if they escape from the Italian coast they have no ports to shelter them and must fall into the hands of ourselves or the French. I am also told that, granted they are given forty-eight hours to clear from port, they have no crews and could not get ready in that time. Thus the moment Italy decides to take the fateful step for which the mass of the population are undoubtedly longing, she will obtain a very important acquisition to her mercantile marine, and after the war a further grave economic loss will be felt by Austria and Germany.

On arriving the following day at Malta I reported myself to Vice-Admiral Limpus, who promised to send me on to the Fleet in the first available vessel. "You must not mind," said the gallant admiral, who only gave

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up the control of the Turkish fleet last August, "if you have to sail in a collier, because if you want to reach the Fleet without delay I believe one is sailing this evening." However, it chanced that the ss. *Sunik*, a brand-new oil tank steamer carrying 6000 tons of water to the Fleet, put in to Malta for instructions that same day, and the admiral informed me I could sail in her on the following afternoon.

Spirit of the Navy

We are all proud of our Navy, of the great deeds it has performed, and of the exemplary patience under the most trying conditions with which the great blockade has been kept up in the North Sea throughout the winter. But we ought to be equally proud of the officers and men who man our mercantile marine, and without whose cordial and unhesitating co-operation the efforts of the Navy would be largely wasted. The officers are a splendid body of men, who deserve well of their countrymen. They work unnoticed and without hope of reward. This ship, the *Sunik*, has spent the winter off the coast of Scotland and in the Irish Channel. She has braved storms, submarines, and mines like hundreds of others. She carries no guns to protect her against the deadly foe from below, and, as far as I know, the only weapon on board is the captain's revolver. Whilst off the English coast from hour to hour no one on board knew when the summons might come. The officers and crew carry their lives in their hands. They can expect no warning and no mercy from the cowardly enemy who has thrown the laws of war and the time-honoured dictates of humanity to the winds.

When ordered out to the Mediterranean the *Sunik* made her way unescorted down the Irish Channel, across the mouth of the English Channel, and then on into the

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Bay. After the North Sea, the coast of Scotland, and the Irish Channel, a cruise down the peaceful Mediterranean comes as a delightful respite to these brave men. The sunshine of the south has a cheering effect on the spirits of the crew. You know and feel that you are absolutely safe from man, and have only the ever-changing elements to face. These have not been over kind to the cause of the Allies up to the present. Time and time again the operations against the Dardanelles have been hampered by storms, rain and thick mists.

We left Malta on Friday, April 2, under ideal conditions—bright sunshine overhead, and not a ripple on the water. It was impossible to believe that Europe was at war. On Saturday the weather held, and we made good progress, but on Monday morning we ran into a storm of wind and rain, which continued almost without cessation for three days and nights. Many of our merchant captains and their crews have never traversed the waters of the Mediterranean; its currents, changing weather conditions, its lights, and the innumerable islands of the Archipelago are a new field of discovery to them. Amazing as it may seem, the charts are also old and very inaccurate, all of which adds to the difficulty of correct navigation. As long as the weather holds, and you have a long horizon, these difficulties do not count for much, but when the sea is running high, and everything in front is blotted out by thick, driving sleet and bursting spray, and when you are not sure of your reckoning, and know from the map there should be an island somewhere on your port bow, and two smaller ones to starboard, and that your correct course lies somewhere through a narrow channel between the two—why, then even the stoutest-hearted sailor has moments of anxiety.

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Perilous Journey

But we are a Fleet messenger, under orders to arrive at our destination without delay; the same blood and spirit of enterprise of the Elizabethan era courses through the veins of the officers and men, and we press on, groping our way blindly and risking bumps with the Archipelago. The captain never leaves the bridge for nearly forty-eight hours at a stretch. The sea is breaking over our decks, leaving the well a huge bath of raging surf. Once, when the sun appears for a moment, we see, a quarter of a mile away, a small tug towing a lighter and making very bad weather. She signals, "Can you tell me where I am? Have lost my reckoning." We reply as approximately as possible, although our captain frankly admits privately that he knows little more than the tug. Then she replies, "Have lost three of my four lighters, broken loose; have you sighted them?" We have not, and tell her so. One more signal and we part company. "You might tell the admiral when you get in."

Then we are off, and the tug and the lighter, which have come all the way from Malta, are swallowed up from view by the huge seas. That night we have to slow down, because a well-known island, which I will not name, but which is sacred to Venus, the Goddess of Love, refuses to reveal her whereabouts under such conditions, and the captain remarks, "We can't have a love affair in the middle of a war like this."

Plucky Young Officers

At dawn the sea has risen even more, but it is rather clearer, and the Isle of Love is visible not far off. Then we sight two little black dots a long way to port, and the captain pronounces them to be trawlers. They are obviously making frantic efforts to overtake us, so we

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slow down and wait in the trough of the sea. They are having about as rotten a time as any one could wish for. Every sea sweeps them from bow to stern. They roll right under the waves and disappear from view for minutes at a time, and then come bobbing up again, only to disappear once more. The low bridges are swept by the surf, and even the funnels and masts are hidden in the white cloud of breaking foam. "They are two North Sea trawlers," says the captain, "and wonderful sea boats they are, but a bit uncomfortable in weather like this."

This mild estimate of what the crews must be suffering sounds almost cruel and callous to the layman's ears. When they come up we can make out on the tiny bridges two figures covered in oilskins, but nevertheless drenched through and looking like drowned rats. They are two young sub-lieutenants, not out of their "teens," who have been placed in charge of these trawlers to take them to the Dardanelles. They have come straight from the North Sea, and have suffered every imaginable form of discomfort on the way. For the last forty-eight hours they have been swept fore and aft by the huge waves, and their officers have not been able to leave the bridge. But both are cheerful and happy and perfectly frank. They hail us through the megaphone: "We are quite lost; haven't an idea where we are; where are you bound for; can we follow you in?" Our captain gives our destination, which I am not allowed to do, and once more we get under way.

The two trawlers, trying to keep close up, have to increase their speed, and get more buried in the waves than ever before. They dance on the top of a wave, are lost to view, then roll their gunwales under and twist and turn like freak dancers. They fall behind, but keep us in view until at length we sight our destination.

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Every full ship—whether a battleship, transport, or cargo boat—is moving eastwards in the Mediterranean. Those which go west are empties returning for fresh loads of warriors, ammunition, or stores. All are animated by the same indomitable spirit. You see it on the battleship, on the transport, and in the little tug. For the first time since the last Crusade the West is turning against the East. The Christian world is about to avenge the great conquest of the Byzantine Empire achieved by Mahomed II on that fateful May 29, 1453.

The "Queen Elizabeth"

Now we round a bend and come in sight of a portion of the Fleet. The first sight which greets our eyes are the fighting-tops of the mighty *Queen Elizabeth*—the most powerful warship afloat in any waters. Her huge body is hidden by some low-lying land. Shades of Nelson! But suddenly we see a destroyer dashing her way towards us and flying the French flag. It is hard to believe that within two days' gentle steam of where the Battle of the Nile was fought, a century after Trafalgar, a French destroyer is engaged in protecting England's battleships.

We give our number and the destroyer retires satisfied, and we make our way slowly in. Then a torpedo-boat, this time flying British colours, dashes up and asks if we know our way among the rocks and shoals. We do not and frankly admit the same, so she gives us a friendly lead. Half an hour later we are amongst the battleships, cruisers, store-ships, and destroyers. Everything in the Navy is organised down to the smallest detail. Our captain sees a comfortable-looking, unoccupied berth, and makes for it to anchor. On a battleship close by a sailor sits astride the bridge and starts furiously waving little flags. These cannot be read from our bridge and both officers

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and men lack practice at the rapid reading of signals, so we have to turn the ship and go back. The little flags tell us that a berth has been assigned for us at the other end of the bay. When we are half-way across a pinnace steams up and two officers come on board who take charge of the ship and conduct us personally to our anchorage.

On a Super-Dreadnought

This same pinnace, once we are safely anchored, takes me across to the *Queen Elizabeth* to visit the admiral. This, the latest of our super-Dreadnoughts, is a revelation. She only carries eight great 15-in. guns, and a secondary armament of 6-in. But those eight make every other gun you have ever seen look ridiculous and contemptible. The gunners say they can almost land on a penny at 15,000 yards, even with three-quarter charges. They have already done some wonderful shooting right across the Gallipoli Peninsula, over the low-lying ground near Gaba Tepe. The great ship has in turn received her baptism of fire, and has been struck by three shells, one of which came through the gun-room, but fortunately all the midshipmen were at their stations, and no one was hurt. Another came through her unprotected side, high up, but burst without doing any damage. The third, I think, hit her funnel.

You get a good idea of what a complete command of the sea we have obtained when you see how we are able to spare this, our latest and most powerful Dreadnought, for the operations against the Dardanelles, instead of hurrying her off, as soon as completed, to Sir John Jellicoe somewhere in the North Sea. Very shortly there will be four other *Queen Elizabeths* ready for active service; therefore, if the Germans ever intend to leave the shelter of the Kiel Canal, they had better do so soon.

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They have no ships afloat which can compare in gun-power with the *Queen Elizabeth* class.

A short distance from the *Queen Elizabeth* lies the Dreadnought cruiser *Inflexible*. This ship has seen more fighting in the war than almost any other vessel in the Fleet. She was one of Admiral Sir Doveton Sturdee's squadron when he put an end to Von Spee and his squadron off the Falkland Islands. The officers tell you that that action was child's play to what they had to face on March 18, when the great attack was made on the Dardanelles. The *Inflexible* suffered heavily. Her foretop was hit by a shell, which killed or wounded all of those up aloft but two seamen. At the same time another shell set fire to some woodwork at the base of the mast, and the flames spread upwards, rendering the task of bringing down the wounded from the fighting-top impossible until they were extinguished. She will shortly rejoin the Fleet, as good as ever.

The admiral promised to find me accommodation on the first battleship available, and I returned for two days to the *Sunik*. On April 8 a cutter comes alongside with orders for me to transfer to the battleship *Triumph*, which will take me to the Fleet, which is keeping its ceaseless watch outside the Dardanelles. On reaching the Fleet I am transferred to the battleship *London*, where for the present I shall remain.

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CHAPTER II

THE ALLIES' GREAT TASK

April 12

THE days of the Turk in Europe are numbered, but no one will deny that he is dying hard and game. It came as a disagreeable shock to many to read on the morning of March 19 that two British battleships and one French had been sunk in the Dardanelles, whilst several others had been hit and damaged. The blow was all the more sudden because the public had been led to believe from previous official and unofficial reports that all was going well.

We were told that the outer forts had been completely destroyed, and that the work of mine-sweeping had made excellent progress. This news was given in perfect good faith, and was also quite true, but we built up on it too great a structure of hope, few realising the immense difficulties the Fleet has had to face, obstacles which do not really commence until the Narrows are approached. The combined advance of the Allied Fleet up the Dardanelles on March 18 was not an attempt to pass the Narrows. It was merely intended as a great demonstration against the forts, in order that the destroyers and sweepers might clear the mine field under cover of the guns of the ships.

This work was carried out in the most gallant manner, and was perfectly successful, but, unfortunately, the further advance had to be abandoned, owing to the sudden and unexpected disasters to three vessels inflicted

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by drifting mines. Yet the price paid cannot be considered too high when one remembers the issues at stake, and the vast bearing they may have on the future of the war. The Turks have always believed the Dardanelles to be impregnable, and this belief had been accepted as the truth by most lay minds until the Navy started to put the issue to the test. Then for some unknown reason there came a quite unjustifiable wave of optimism, which swept over the country until the eyes of the public were opened by the events of March 18.

Changed Conditions

In the old days of sailing ships the Dardanelles were a most formidable obstacle, which no admiral would have faced with confidence. But then the guns of both forts and ships had only a very short range, and the chief difficulty was to find a favourable wind which would carry the old three-deckers past the Narrows up into the Sea of Marmora. They could have got through had they been able to keep in the centre of the channel and make their way against the four-knot current which comes swirling down. But unless the wind was dead aft they had to tack from side to side, thus coming within close range of the forts, whose fire it was almost impossible to keep down by broadsides.

If it was almost impossible to overcome these obstacles in the early days of the nineteenth century the difficulties and dangers of the passage have been increased tenfold now by long-range weapons, torpedoes, and mines. Nevertheless, the Navy is of opinion that the Narrows can be forced, in spite of these obstacles, and this opinion has been strengthened and confirmed by the great trial of March 18. It might mean the loss of ships, but if the occasion justified the sacrifice the Fleet would not hesitate to make the attempt.

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But, unless there were a powerful army ready to occupy the Gallipoli Peninsula the moment the Fleet passed into the Sea of Marmora, or made its way to Constantinople, the Straits would immediately be closed behind it, and, supposing the Turks, backed up by German officers and German intrigues, decided to continue the war, it would have to fight its way out, and again clear the mine field. It has long been an accepted axiom of naval warfare that ships are of no use against forts, or that they fight at such a disadvantage that it is not worth while employing them for such a purpose.

Remarkable Resistance

This axiom must now be modified, after the experience which the Fleet has gained in the present operations against the Dardanelles. Any fort built of stone or concrete, however strong, can be put out of action by direct fire from guns, if only a clear view of it can be obtained, or provided aeroplanes are available to "spot" for the gunners, to signal back results, and correct the fire. Yet nothing has amazed the gunners out here more than the resisting power of these old forts round the Dardanelles.

For instance, those at Seddul Bahr and Kum Kale, at the northern and southern entrances to the Dardanelles, were subjected to a terrific bombardment by the combined Fleets on February 19, both at long and short range. They were so completely smothered with fire that no one believed a stone or a gun could be left standing. Their fire was, in fact, completely silenced. Yet, when the landing parties were put ashore to examine them, the material damage was found to be comparatively small, although they were mere shambles.

Many of the guns were still intact, and one 9-in. was actually found loaded. The work of destruction had to

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be completed by the landing parties, and the forts are now heaps of unoccupied ruins, with their guns lying about at all angles. In like manner the forts at Chanak, on the Asiatic side of the Narrows, and at Kilid Bahr, on the European, together with the batteries known as Nos. 7 and 8 lower down the Straits, were silenced temporarily on March 18, because they were so completely smothered by a tremendous volume of fire that the gunners were driven from the guns to the cover of their bomb-proof shelters; but in view of experience gained on February 25 the Fleet does not claim to have knocked out many guns in them, and after the disaster to the *Irresistible* and *Ocean* some of the guns were manned again, and concentrated a tremendous fire on these unfortunate ships during the work of removing the crews to destroyers.

Germans' Valuable Aid

It must also be borne in mind that the Turks were not relying on their heavy guns alone to defend the Straits. They knew that their mine field was to a great extent intact, and that the Fleet would have great difficulty in getting through without heavy loss. Nevertheless, all those works which actually overlook the Dardanelles, and are situated right on the shores of the Straits, can speedily be placed out of action by the guns of ships, or else smothered with such a volume of fire that the gunners will be forced to take shelter in the bomb-proofs. But such works as these only come within the category of obsolete defences. They are no longer the real obstacles which must be overcome before the passage can be forced.

The Turkish soldier fights very well behind entrenchments, but he is a very bad gunner and possesses absolutely no knowledge of the science of war. Had the

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defence of the Straits been left in his hands alone the Allied Fleet would most probably have been off Constantinople by now. But the Turkish army, directed by highly trained German officers, and having the advantage of their science and technical skill, is a very different enemy. One must give the Germans their due meed of praise for the manner in which they have adapted the defences to meet the immense power of the ships' guns, and for having built up a kind of secondary defence out of any material available—which is now proving far more formidable than the old forts mounting the heaviest guns.

The Fleet has three main obstacles to overcome, and to achieve decisive results the assistance of a very large expeditionary force, supplied with powerful artillery, both field and howitzer, is essential. First and foremost are the mine fields, which are constantly being renewed, and the floating mines, which are carried down by the four-knot current. It is now generally accepted that it was mines of this description which sank the *Bouvet*, the *Irresistible*, and the *Ocean*.

Formidable Obstacles

The second obstacle which must be overcome is formed by the concealed batteries of heavy howitzers and direct-fire guns which have been placed in position since the first attack on the outer forts. The movable batteries of field guns and light howitzers, which are shifted from point to point under perfect cover, and which open up on the ships from the most unexpected positions, present the third obstacle. All these defences have an important bearing on each other. For instance, field guns and light howitzers can do little or no damage to a battleship cleared for action except to those in her control tops. Several ships have thus suffered. But

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they can inflict very serious damage on trawlers and destroyers engaged in the task of sweeping the Straits.

The work has often had to be checked on account of the severity of this fire. The destroyers and trawlers go up the Dardanelles under the protection of a battleship and commence their operations. They are immediately subjected to a tremendous fire from the enemy's light guns, which are so carefully concealed that the secondary armament of the battleship in charge finds it almost impossible to pick up a target. They can only aim at the flashes of the guns when these are visible, or else by the map, after an aeroplane reconnaissance has located a battery. Some guns and batteries are temporarily silenced, but on the following day they are shifted to a fresh position and the task of locating them has to commence all over again.

Thus the task of clearing the fixed mine field is rendered extremely difficult. The Germans have also mounted many heavy guns inland, where it is extremely difficult to locate them, and some of these are powerful enough to inflict very serious damage on battleships. Anything made of stone or concrete which is visible will be speedily smothered by the direct fire of naval guns, and by indirect fire, assisted by accurate "spotting" from an aeroplane.

Strength of Earthworks

In this sense the old axiom that ships are of no use against forts is quite inaccurate, but the enemy has discovered that even the heaviest shells can do but a minimum of damage to a well-constructed emplacement of earth thrown up in front of a gun. The great shells from the ships throw up an enormous amount of smoke and earth, but the actual damage is small. It can, in fact, generally be made good during the night, or when the weather is

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too thick to allow of shooting. A battleship has to score a direct hit on the gun itself before guns mounted in this simple manner can fairly be said to be out of action. The difficulty of scoring direct hits is enormous, especially when the fire is indirect and has to be corrected by aeroplanes, which are themselves constantly exposed to heavy shrapnel fire which it is impossible to keep under.

If the ground on the European and Asiatic sides of the Straits were flat the task would be comparatively easy, because the enemy's guns could be kept out of range by the long-range 6-in. of the ships. Unfortunately, it is just the reverse. The Gallipoli Peninsula is a jumble of hills, valleys, small rivers, low-lying ridges, and spurs, which assume no regular formation, and which seem to have been especially designed by Nature to assist the defence of the Straits. In parts the country is thickly wooded, in others the trees are sparse, and there are patches of low-lying ground which have been cultivated. The ascent from the shore is steep and fairly high, and the ships must clear this initial obstacle before they can reach their mark.

Concealed Batteries

Amongst this hilly country there are innumerable positions where guns can be concealed, in valleys, behind hills, or amongst trees. When a gun or battery has been located by an aeroplane it is often necessary to fire right over the top of several ridges of hills, and the smoke of the bursting projectiles cannot be seen, even from the control tops. The Asiatic shore of the Straits is lower, and is commanded along almost its whole length by the European. The hills are not so flush with the water, and it is therefore easier to locate batteries on that side.

But even with this small assistance it has been found impossible to silence the enemy's guns. Amongst the

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hills and broken ground they conceal them with ease and security, and they are also, apparently, able to move guns with much greater facility on the south side.

The more the task of forcing the Straits is examined, the more stupendous proportions does it assume. We do not know what number of troops the Turks have on the Peninsula and on the Asiatic side, but it must not be forgotten that they have had ample time and ample warning to bring up any reinforcements which are available from the needs of the other theatres of war. They are entrenched up to their necks, and have placed barbed wire round every position. The Fleet has done, and is doing, everything possible to assure success, in the face of obstacles such as no Fleet has taken on before. The tale of gallant deeds is a long and glorious one. But the facts must be faced. They are briefly these—

No Fleet can advance even close to the Narrows, much less through them, until the mine field has been cleared. The enemy's heavy concealed guns and light mobile artillery render this task impossible, even under the covering fire of the battleships, for the reasons I have already explained. In addition, there is every known reason to believe that the Turks have placed a large number of torpedo-tubes along both shores. Therefore, the only way the Straits can be opened is from the land side. To accomplish this a very large expeditionary force is required, and also a very large number of field howitzers, with which to deal with the concealed batteries.

The guns of the battleships can cover a landing, and their fire will be able to assist an advance inland up to a certain point, but once the army is on shore it must do the real work of taking the enemy's positions in reverse by its own unaided efforts. We do not know the enemy's numbers, but he is entrenched everywhere, and the lessons of Flanders have brought it clearly home what

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the cost of assaulting entrenched positions means. Everything will depend on the number of guns available for shore work, and the numbers of infantry.

A great army is required to ensure success. The occupation of the Gallipoli Peninsula would probably enable the Straits to be cleared for the ships to pass, because, as I have already said, the northern shore commands the southern, and the enemy's artillery on the Asiatic side could thus be kept at a distance.

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CHAPTER III

A BATTLESHIP IN ACTION

April

THE average man, were he given his choice, would much rather fight under a blue sky in an even temperature and amidst beautiful surroundings, than in the cold rain, fogs, and eternal grey of northern Europe in winter time. Out here in the Mediterranean we are just entering on ideal conditions. The weather is fine and it is not too hot, although already the warmth of the coming summer can be felt towards noon; the sea for several days has been perfectly calm, and its deep blue is only rivalled by the clear sky above. The surrounding islands sparkle like great jewels in the shining atmosphere. They are green, and blue, and yellow in turn, as the sun reflects different points, and over them all tower the still snow-clad peaks of Samothrace. It is the commencement of the season so beloved by yachtsmen in past days, when Constantinople was still governed in the old-time way by Abdul Hamid, when every one, except the Armenians, felt secure, and the European colony disported innumerable little steam yachts and sailing vessels in the Bosphorus, along the shores of the Sea of Marmora, and down the fateful Dardanelles. But few thought of war then, and no one anticipated that the East would close the gate of Byzantium against the West, and that in the year 1915 a huge fleet of British and French battleships would be cruising outside, waiting to fight its way through the Narrows.

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Out here, the setting for war does not seem real. It does not seem right or fitting that Nature should provide such a beautiful arena for this tremendous conflict of nations. You have to keep your mind concentrated on the fact that there is a great war on, and a very grim tragedy to be played out in the course of the next few weeks, which will restore the possession of Saint Sofia to Christianity, or leave the Crescent more triumphant than at any time since that fateful May 29, 1481, when Mohammed II entered Constantinople at the head of his blood-stained Janissaries. At times your mind is apt to wander, and you imagine you are the guest of some captain of your acquaintance, who has invited you to spend a few pleasant weeks on a cruise in Eastern waters.

Off Duty

When your ship forms part of the squadron which is off duty, you lie at anchor off Tenedos, and have little to do except to watch the aeroplanes soaring upwards from the aerodrome—a fine natural piece of ground, which might have been specially designed by Nature for the arrival of Commander Samson and his gallant crowd of aviators, observers, and mechanics—and then disappearing towards the Straits, which are only eight miles away. In the distance you can just see the hulls and the smoke of the battleships which are on patrol duty, and you wonder whether they are shelling the enemy or not, because the sound of the guns seldom travels in this direction. Otherwise you do little except to try and find something to read or something to write about.

At night, an atmosphere of greater reality is added to the scene, because you are battened down. That is to say, you are sitting in your cabin watching a matchless sunset, when a huge marine enters, and without a word

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closes both your ports and fastens down the steel shutters on the inside. On your first night you ask him why, and he replies, "War time, sir, no lights to be shown after dark." Thus, throughout the remainder of the evening, and all through the nights, which are just beginning to get hot, you have to dwell in this stuffy atmosphere, and generally wake up with a slight headache, which soon leaves you when the ports are opened at daybreak.

Then, one evening, it is your turn for patrol, and you know that for the next forty-eight hours something exciting may happen. That night we are off the Straits, and watch the enemy's powerful searchlights, which still flash defiantly seawards. We cruise up and down, and at dawn are just off the entrance. It looks as if there was nothing to stop your ship from passing right up into the Sea of Marmora, and on to Constantinople. There are the battered ruins of Seddul Bahr and Kum Kale to remind you there has been a fight, but otherwise you cannot see a fort, a battery, or a single human being. They might all have cleared out for all the interest they take in us, although we are only half a mile from the shore, and well within rifle shot. We are on the bridge, examining the enemy's positions, when a sharp-eyed signalman calls out, "Aeroplane coming overhead, sir." We pick it up with our glasses, and see it is one of the latest which has just arrived from England; it is flying high, and passes over Gallipoli. Then another signalman calls out, "They've fired at it, sir."

Cruising up the Coast

These remarks have been addressed to the captain. Just beneath the yellow wings, so it appears, but in reality much further off, a little ball of white smoke unrolls itself against the blue sky. It is shrapnel, and a little later the faint boom of a gun is wafted across the

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glass-like water to our ears. It is followed by another ball of white smoke, and yet another, but the shots are not very near. The aeroplane takes not the smallest notice, but continues on its way like some wild duck in full flight, undisturbed by the pellets of some sportsman who is almost out of range in the marsh beneath. The gunner officer alone becomes fidgety. He edges nearer the captain, and seems to want to say something, but waits for yet another puff of white against the blue background. This does not disappoint him, and he speaks out: "Shall I try that battery with a few rounds of six-inch, sir?" The captain turns on him, and quells him. "What is the use? You can't see where they are firing from, and, besides, that machine isn't spotting for us, for so you won't be able to correct the aim." The gunner leaves the bridge with the look of a man who has just been refused by a millionairess.

Then we cruise up the Gallipoli coast, a short distance from the shore, as far as Gaba Tepe. We examine every yard of the ground, but fail to see a gun or an enemy, only entrenchments and barbed wire thrown up at various points where a landing might be attempted. It is a disappointing morning, and we all long for something to happen. At Gaba Tepe we turn outwards, and the captain reminds us that it is Sunday morning by remarking to the officer of the watch: "You can pipe hands for service on the quarter-deck." A mixed crowd of marines, bluejackets, stokers, ship's boys, midshipmen, and officers assemble in a few minutes, and the band strikes up an Easter hymn. But Easter has already passed, and I wonder why.

A Delayed Easter Service

Our parson then appears, in his white surplice and mortarboard, looking rather incongruous on the war-

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stained quarter-deck, with the crew, no longer in smart trim uniforms, in front of him, and with the ruins of Seddul Bahr as a background. All is ready, and an officer, in a voice which conveys absolutely no meaning to the lay mind, gives an order, which brings all hats off. Our parson is a volunteer who was a curate in an East End parish when war broke out, and who has signed on for its duration. He is a fine fellow, has a love of fighting under his clerical exterior, and is a great favourite with all. He begins, "As we were unable to hold our Easter Service last Sunday, for reasons which you all know, I propose to hold it this." Some of the ship's boys smile, and a grim look comes over the faces of some of the older hands. I will here explain that the Easter Sunday service was not held because the ship was a long way up the Dardanelles, engaged in a furious duel with the enemy's batteries whilst covering trawlers at work mine-sweeping. The band strikes up a hymn, but the response is very feeble. Something seems to have gone wrong, either because only half the band is able to be present, or else the crew are disappointed with the quiet manner in which the morning has passed, and contrast it sadly with the previous Sunday. A few prayers are said, a brief extract is read, the Blessing is pronounced, and all is over.

Lunch is the next item on the programme with which we concern ourselves, and then those who are not on duty retire to read or to sleep, and later on to play deck games just as you do in a liner. Tea comes at 3.30, followed by a further effort to pass the time. It is now a little after five. Most of us are gathered on the quarter-deck, while our parson has just disappeared, fully robed, into the starboard battery, where he is to hold a service for the crew only. Suddenly some one rushes up the companion ladder and says, "Have you heard the

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news?" "What news?" we ask listlessly. "To-morrow we are to enter the Dardanelles, and go as far as the edge of the mine field, to cover a destroyer which is to make a reconnaisance." Immediately, as if by magic, the weary, bored look disappears, and every one springs to life. You would hardly know you were on the same ship, and amidst the same companions. Suddenly, from the starboard battery, the muttered intonations of the parson are succeeded by a tremendous roar from hundreds of voices singing, or rather shouting in unison—

"Abide with me, fast falls the eventide."

"They didn't sing like that this morning," I venture to remark. "No, they've just heard the good news," some one replies at my elbow. It is indeed true, and as the words of that fine old hymn are wafted across the still waters, they must have been almost audible to the waiting Ottomans round Seddul Bahr and Gaba Tepe.

Fight in Prospect

The prospects of a fight on the following morning had a cheering effect on every one on board. The ward-room mess is gayer that evening; chances are discussed, and mild disputes arise as to which is really the safest place on a battleship in action. That evening I was handed out a patent waistcoat, which keeps you afloat if your ship strikes a mine, but there is a good deal of doubt as to which way up.

Those who are accustomed to active service with armies cannot fail to be struck by the different conditions which prevail in the Navy. For instance, if a regiment hears it is to attack the enemy's position on the following morning, there are endless preparations to be made, which will keep every one up most of the night. Maps must be studied, ammunition and rations served out to

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the men, arrangements must be made for striking camp, and the regimental transport got ready to move forward to the new position. Every one of the thirty odd officers must have his definite and precise instructions as to the particular rôle he will be called upon to play. Steps must be taken to ensure a sufficient reserve of ammunition, and perhaps rations for two or three days must be served out to the men. A regiment is, in fact, a body composed of a thousand odd units, each one of which has an independent existence during an attack, all of whom have it in their power to do the right or the wrong thing. But a battleship is entirely different. On active service she is always ready for action, and the final preparations take about five minutes. Thus, your normal life continues right up to the psychological moment when the bugle sounds the call to "Action Stations." You can have your bath, and shave, and dress, and will find your breakfast carefully laid out to be eaten comfortably just as on any other morning of the year. There may be a suppressed air of excitement, and you may notice the crew moving more briskly, but that is all.

The Captain's Responsibility

Unlike conditions in the Army, there is not that margin for individual error, and but few have to receive special instructions, because each of the 800 odd minds on board knows his special place and special job in action, and all he has to do is to double there as quick as he can when the bugle announces that the real work is about to commence. One brain alone controls everything on broad, and that is the captain's, who is in the conning tower with a small staff of assistants. Thus, when a battleship goes into action, only the captain knows where she is going and what she is doing. All

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the responsibility rests with him alone, and the large majority of the ship's company, buried deep down between decks at their stations, are led blindly to victory or destruction without seeing, hearing, or knowing what is taking place. They are engaged in purely mechanical tasks, such as stoking, passing up ammunition, minding the engines, or working the guns. The final efficiency of a ship's company can, of course, only be estimated, not by what the captain does in action, but by the manner in which the several tasks are carried out.

That night, when I went to bed, I had to pass through a passage filled with the midshipmen's hammocks. You felt almost as if you were back in a public school, and it seemed strange indeed that so many still in their teens would be facing just the same risks on the following morning as the oldest veteran on board. When I awoke the next morning, I expected to find a scene of bustle, excitement, and apparent confusion prevailing everywhere. But not at all. At eight a.m. the band struck up " God Save the King," followed by the French and Russian National Anthems. In the wardroom I found breakfast going on just as quietly as usual, and many of the officers reading the papers which had arrived the night before. On mounting the quarter-deck I found it was being washed down as usual.

Clearing for Action

We are now lying just off the entrance of the Dardanelles. About nine o'clock a stir becomes evident on board. A marine enters my cabin, shuts the portholes, and carefully screws down the steel shutters. I find others enaged in a similar task in the wardroom. On deck I find the crew busily clearing for action, which consists in closing the companion ways and skylights, fastening down the steel shutters, and removing the deck

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rail so that there is nothing to interfere with the fire of the guns. Between decks I find others stowing all the hammocks down below, and removing anything which is inflammable. Others are closing watertight doors, and to the layman it becomes difficult to move from one part of the ship to another. These simple preparations having been made, we assemble once again in the ward-room, from which most of the furniture has been removed. Here we sit discussing our prospects in the coming fight, and some jokingly put forward the best thing to do in the event of the ship striking a mine. Suddenly "General quarters" is sounded, and the whole party double off to their respective posts, leaving me to roam about the ship at will.

I first visit the starboard battery, which is deserted because there is no object in manning the small twelve-pounders, as their crews would not be behind armour. There are two six-inch casemates in this battery, and I glance into these. Here the crews are busy getting ready the gun, arranging the 100-pound shells, and hauling up ammunition from the passages beneath. Except for these four casemates, the upper part of the ship seems to be quite deserted, so I descend to the main deck, where I run across the Fleet engineer, who carries a somewhat bored look. I ask him where his station is in an action. He replies, "When I'm not wanted in the engine-room I wander about and try and learn what is happening. It is very dull down below, cut off from all the news." I then descend another iron ladder, and find myself in what is known as the "Bag Flats," where I meet the parson, who says, "Come and see the sick bay, where I stay during action." I pass along endless stuffy passages, crowded with men and boys, who apparently have nothing to do except to sit still and wonder if the ship will strike a mine or not, and after passing

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through innumerable doors, some of which are closed after me, I enter the sick bay, which is equally crowded.

A Maze of Machinery

Here is the Fleet surgeon and his assistants, ready to handle any casualties. Knives, saws, basins, lint, chloroform, are all laid out with that neatness and precision which is typical of everything in the Navy. The sight is depressing, and the atmosphere so stuffy that I speedily accept the invitation of a chief gunner to descend to another floor to the ammunition passages and see the six-inch shell room. On the way I pass the lieutenant-commander and a lot of men, and I ask him what his job is. He replies, "We have to wait here until the ship catches fire, and then we try and put it out." In the ammunition passages I find men busy placing six-inch shells in canvas carriers and hoisting them up by pulleys to the six-inch casemates. I then glance into a small room which contains innumerable speaking tubes, navyphones and telephones, electric bells, wires and electrical plant. This is the transmitting room, and all the range and results of shots taken in the control chamber on the foretop are telephoned down here to be passed on to the various guns. It all seems confusing and incomprehensible to the lay mind. Every step you take you stumble over or on fresh machinery. Below decks is a jumble of electric engines, hydraulic steam pumps, wires, tubes, 'phones, and a hundred other complications of science, until you wonder how any mind can ever master their use.

The gunner then says, "Would you like to see the cordite-chamber?" I climb through a round hole and descend a steel ladder. It is amazing how many decks a battleship has. I have, in fact, now gone down so many that I have lost all count; all I know is that I am a long

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way below the water level and somewhere near the double bottom.

When I reach the starboard battery once again I do not see a soul. Every one has vanished below armour as if by magic, and we are slowly steaming towards the Dardanelles. It is, however, pleasant to find oneself again in the fresh air, and to be able to see with your own eyes what is happening. I sincerely feel sorry for the hundreds whom I have just left below. I make my way towards the conning tower. The captain is standing just outside it, and invites me to enter. I find myself in a little round steel chamber, with an opening about eight inches high, all round at the top. It is packed with eleven officers and men. One is at a tiny little wheel, which looks hardly big enough to control a Thames launch, but the great ship is responding to every turn.

On the Foretop

I then leave the conning tower and make for my final destination, which is the control station on the foretop. The ascent is made by a steel ladder, and before you can enter the fighting top you have to turn a corner, climb out on the shrouds, and then up through a kind of small coal hole, such as you see in any London street. I hate this climb, which is terrifying to any one who is not accustomed to climb great heights in a wind on a pole stuck on a moving and very often highly unsteady platform. The weather has been very bad all the morning, with storms of wind and rain, which at this moment almost blot out the shore and the battered forts of Seddul Bahr and Gaba Tepe. On safely negotiating the shrouds and the coal hole, I find myself in a small oblong chamber of thin steel, which would not even keep out a bullet fired at close range. It is open all round at the top, and has a similar thin steel roof. Inside are a lieutenant

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of marines, a naval lieutenant, two midshipmen, and three sailors, a rangefinder, several pairs of glasses, some telescopes, and the eternal voice pipe, navyphones, and telephones for speaking to the conning-tower, the engine-room, the batteries, and the transmitting station. We are very crowded, and our tempers are ruffled by the heavy rain.

My sensations are very strange when I find myself aloft. They are quite different from those which you get when about to go into action on land. A feeling of intense insecurity comes over me, and also one of extreme loneliness. On the ship beneath not a soul is visible, all are hidden below, and will know nothing until it is over. In an hour they will probably be still safe and sound, or else drowned like rats in a huge trap. The thought occurs to me that it is very strange to be perched up here, a hundred feet above the sea, with a ship full of high explosives beneath you, and a sea which you imagine must be full of mines beneath the ship. Then a kind of feeling follows that you have lost your individual existence, and are merely a fitting on this great steel monstrosity, which is gliding so slowly, yet remorselessly towards the danger zone. You say to yourself: "Whatever happens, we shall all survive, or go together," and you have the satisfaction of feeling that you cannot be left lying wounded on the battlefield. The land on either side looks so firm and secure, whilst up in the fighting top you cannot shake off the feeling of some great unknown danger, such as you have never faced before, continually lurking around you.

Speaking Tubes Busy

But these reflections only last a few moments, and you become interested in what your companions are doing. The lieutenant of marines is trying to pick up

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ranges on the Asiatic coast. The two midshipmen, whom you feel ought to be back at school and not about to enter the Dardanelles, seem perfectly happy and contented with their lot, and are discussing what happened in the last fight. The lieutenant is using very strong language down a voice tube to some unknown individual buried somewhere in the bowels of the ship, who will not reply audibly to him. The three sailors each have their ears to a telephone and their mouths to a tube. They seem to be indulging in a solemn Gregorian chant, which never ceases, and the only words I can catch are "Foretop to F Battery," "Foretop to X Battery," "Foretop to A Battery." The words are drawled and drawn out. They are followed by instructions as to various ranges which have been taken by the marine lieutenant.

Some of the speaking tubes are not very audible, as the rain has got down them. This causes further trouble, and the lieutenant orders one of the midshipmen to go down and find out what is wrong. I feel sorry for him, as he crawls through the coal hole out into the wind and rain, on to the shrouds, and then round the corner, and so on down that horrible steel ladder. But he seems to regard it as a very small matter, and hangs on like a monkey to a cocoanut tree. Then a solemn discussion arises between the two lieutenants as to whether it is agreed that we shall all duck when we hear a shell coming our way. In an ordinary naval engagement, if a shell hits the control top, it is all over with every one in it unless some one has abnormal luck, and no amount of ducking would help you; but the Turks have, in addition, numerous field guns which fire shrapnel at the tops, and although our thin steel protection will not keep out a shell, it might turn a shrapnel or rifle bullet. There have, in fact, been several casualties from these small guns. So it is agreed, to every one's satisfaction, that

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we shall all get our heads under cover when we hear a shell coming.

Under Fire

We are now well up the Straits, and wondering when the enemy will begin. The destroyer is about 200 yards ahead when some one shouts out: "They're off," just as if it was a race. You hear the whistle of a shell, and a jet of water rises up just astern of her. At the same moment there is a deafening roar, which makes you spring a yard in the air, and you hear one of our six-inch shells roaring its way through space, landwards. We watch for the explosion, and, knowing the position of the battery on the chart, we are to signal the proximity of the shot down a speaking tube. Then we hear the screech of more shells, and more great splashes of water rise up ahead, astern, and at the side of the destroyer. You can watch her small bridge crowded with officers, for they are taking up some officers to make a reconnaissance. Our guns now blaze away freely at the Asiastic and European shores, and the noise is deafening. There is a medley of sounds caused by guns being fired, shells screaming overhead, some hitting the water with a flop, others bursting in the air, the eternal Gregorian chant of "Foretop to Y Battery," "Foretop to X Battery," from the three sailors.

The enemy's fire is concentrated on the destroyer, whose movements are interesting and instructive to watch. She is writhing about on all sides, as if she had a bad pain inside her, at other times she reminds you irresistibly of one of Gaby's strange dances. Then it dawns on you that she is engaged in putting the enemy off their aim. One moment she is steaming slowly ahead and a shell drops astern of her, and she shoots off at full speed towards the Asiatic coast, when another drops in

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front, which sends her scooting towards the European. She is no sooner over there when a battery on that side drops some quite close, whereupon she turns suddenly in her own length, and dashes back towards us, which brings the enemy's fire just ahead of our ship. This sends her straight ahead again, and so on, from side to side, up and down, twisting and turning, dancing about like a mad Dervish.

Enemy's Bad Aim

All this time our six-inch guns are blazing away at both shores, the gunners firing at the flashes of the enemy's guns, as it is difficult to pick up their location from the foretop. The *Prince of Wales*, astern of us, has also come into action, and fires some rapid salvoes, which cause a terrible disturbance to somebody's property, even if they miss the Turkish guns. We have now almost reached the point where our instructions have told us to stop, and let the destroyer go on alone, whilst we afford her what protection we can. She goes on some little distance, with shells dropping all around her, but is in luck and is not hit. Then, having apparently accomplished her mission, she turns and dashes past us down the Straits. This brings the enemy's guns directly on us, and the shells scream overhead. You imagine that each is coming direct into the foretop, but they all miss and either burst short or in the water beyond. Then we slowly and majestically turn under a desultory fire, and follow her down to the entrance. The enemy's aim is very bad, some of their shells passing right over the Straits, and hitting the opposite shore. The *Prince of Wales* comes up astern, and follows us round, and after a few more shots the "cease fire" is sounded. It has only been a small affair, and we have not been hit, but just as interesting as a big battle to those who have never seen a battleship in action before.

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CHAPTER IV

ASSEMBLING OF A MIGHTY FLEET

April 19

WHATEVER may be the eventual fate in store for this combined naval and military expedition against the Dardanelles, it certainly appeals most powerfully to the imagination. As a spectacle also it is superb. As I look out on the Bay of Mudros from the quarter-deck of the *London* I see such an assembly of different types of warships, transports, and smaller craft as has never been brought together before. The whole of this immense bay is studded with ships and small boats plying between them. They vary in size and shape from the mighty *Queen Elizabeth*, with her eight 15-in. guns dominating the whole picture, to the little blue-painted fishing smacks of the islanders. Their number is too great to count, even with the most powerful glasses. It would seem as if every type of warship and every type of transport which can possibly be spared from the other theatres of war have been collected here in Mudros Bay for this, probably the last crusade the Christian world will ever make against the Ottoman Turks.

Other crusades have not been noteworthy for the success which has attended them. We can only hope that this, the last and the greatest, will avenge the chivalry of the Middle Ages, whose bones lie scattered and unknown throughout all parts of the old Ottoman Empire, from the gates of Vienna to Jerusalem. But when one sees the immense difficulties which attend an

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enterprise of this sort, even in these days of huge steamships and rapid transit, it certainly increases the admiration and respect that you feel for the knights of old, who attempted the same task without any of the advantages which we enjoy.

Armada in Mudros Bay

The whole of the expeditionary force is now assembled in Mudros Bay, waiting for the order to start on this historic expedition, on which the eyes and the hopes of so many different nations are concentrated. The transports are being protected by many warships which are anchored, covering the entrance with their guns, in case the enemy's torpedo craft should attempt a dash—a very unlikely contingency. Other divisions of our fleet are keeping up their ceaseless watch on the entrance of the Straits, or else conveying officers from the Staff up and down the coast to examine every yard of the enemy's positions. No stone is being left unturned to ensure success.

This is an experiment on a huge scale previously unknown in the annals of this or any other nation. Its nearest parallels are, perhaps, the Spanish Armada; Napoleon's expedition to Egypt in 1798; and the Anglo-French expedition to the Crimea. But here parallels cease. The Armada had not to force one of the most powerful positions in the world, protected by a large covering army, under skilled leaders. The feeble forts of Alexandria could offer no resistance to the guns of Napoleon's covering fleet once the expedition had escaped Nelson's pursuit; and when the Anglo-French troops landed in the Crimea to fight the Battle of the Alma they found an army in position, but not a veritable network of entrenched positions covered by barbed wire and protected by innumerable heavy guns.

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When the difficulties and dangers of all these expeditions are calmly examined by the historian in the future, and when all the facts are available, it will probably be conceded that the preliminary obstacles to be overcome—in spite of our unchallenged command of the sea—are greater in this attempt to force the Dardanelles than in any of the others. Some may maintain that this is an exaggeration, but it must be remembered that all the lessons of the war show the enormous advantage which the defence enjoys against the attack, unless the numbers employed in the latter are overwhelming and a flank is available which may be turned. But this is no ordinary offensive movement which can be developed simultaneously along a big front after having been carefully prepared by an overwhelming artillery fire. It is impossible to land an army of the size we propose—although none will maintain that it is too large and few even large enough for the rôle assigned to it—in a few hours. In spite of the most elaborate preparations and constant practice, it will take days before the whole army and its artillery and material are safely put ashore at the place or places selected. I am, of course, not allowed to mention numbers or the landing sites. Until sufficient stores and ammunition are available no general would dare risk a big advance against the enemy's prepared positions.

Under the Guns of the Fleet

Provided the weather holds there should not be much difficulty in putting the troops ashore, because the disembarkation will be covered by the guns of the Fleet, which should be able to keep at a respectful distance any counter-attack which the enemy may make against the first troops who attempt to seize and hold a stretch of the shore, and thus to provide room for the remainder

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of our forces. As long as the Army is under the guns of the Fleet there is every reason to be confident of success. But as it moves forward to clear the Gallipoli Peninsula, or across it, according to whichever plan is decided on, the support which the Fleet's guns will be able to afford grows less and less, until a point is reached where the issue must really be decided by the Army alone. It would not be right at this stage to discuss the merits of the various plans for an advance which are at the disposal of the Allied commanders. They are wrapt in profound secrecy. We do not even know whether the Straits will be attacked on both the European and Asiatic sides, or whether the military operations will be confined to the Gallipoli Peninsula. I am merely endeavouring to point out some of the difficulties which lie ahead, from the general standpoint.

An estimate has been made of the numbers of Turks available for the defence of Gallipoli, but on what these figures are based, or how correct they may eventually turn out to be, I cannot say. But one point is obvious. If only the Turkish army can be driven back north of the low-lying ground stretching from Gaba Tepe, in the Gulf of Syros, to the Bay of Khelia Liman, east of the Narrows, the main strategic object of the Allies will have been achieved. The scheme of the land expedition is primarily to assist the Fleet to clear the Narrows and to open the road to Constantinople. Once this task has been accomplished, the business of the Army, or at least a portion of it, will be to hold the Gallipoli Peninsula and to prevent the door from being shut behind the Fleet and the mine field replaced. What we do not know, and what it would not be right at this juncture to comment on, are the steps which the military authorities will take to achieve this result. Time will shortly show. The expedition should succeed, but war is full

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of painful surprises, which often upset the most carefully laid plans. No object is, however, served in underestimating the difficulties and thus disappointing the public if anything goes wrong. We are gambling for the biggest stake in our history. If it comes off, we shall be immensely the richer and the end of war will be advanced; if we fail, we shall not have weakened our position in the West materially, but we shall have suffered a moral defeat which may reverberate unpleasantly throughout the Mohammedan peoples of our Empire, while at the same time greatly encouraging our opponents to continue the struggle.

Confident of Victory

The chief factors in the situation which will lead to victory or defeat are these: What are the numbers of Turkish troops available? Have they bestowed as much time and care to preparing the peninsula against an army landing from the Gulf of Syros as they have on the actual defences of the Straits against naval attack alone? Is this expeditionary force of sufficient strength to drive the enemy from his positions and firmly to establish itself astride the peninsula and maintain its positions there? Will the guns of the Fleet be able to afford the Army as much assistance and protection to its flanks as is hoped and calculated on? How far are the enemy's guns available for use against an army from their present position, or will they have to be shifted to meet this fresh menace?

These are all potent considerations, which can only be answered by "putting these grave issues to the test." One fact seems obvious—namely, that as long as the Germans maintain their control of the Turkish army they will leave no stone unturned to defeat the object of the Allies, and that the military authorities must

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calculate on just as high a measure of skill and enterprise on land as the Fleet has encountered by sea.

According to Napoleon, the moral force animating an army is eight-tenths of victory. If this estimate only held good in these days of long-range weapons, machine guns and deadly artillery, the victory would be already assured. But war is no longer a hand-to-hand fight, in which individual prowess counts for so much at close quarters. There is much hand-to-hand fighting, as has been proved in the last seven months all over Europe, but, unfortunately, the bravest and the strongest are often shot down before they can ever close with the enemy and take their toll of his numbers. Both the rank and file of the Army and Navy are confident of victory, and are longing for the real work to begin. The Navy have their comrades who were lost on March 18 to avenge, and they are longing to prove to the Turks and to the Germans that they only retired from the Straits on that occasion because it was highly undesirable to force the Narrows until an army was at hand to prevent the gate being closed behind the Fleet after it had passed into the Sea of Marmora and on to Constantinople.

Lads from "Down Under"

The enthusiasm amongst all ranks is intense. It would do those at home good to see our splendid crews slaving away day after day at a hundred heavy tasks, practising for the great day which is so soon to come. Every soldier is being taken from the transports and trained at embarking and disembarking from warships and transports to the shore, and from the shore to the ships. All this has to be carried out by the ships' boats, which are away at dawn, and only return at dusk, with their crews worn out but ever cheerful. The feeling

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between the Army and the Navy is one of mutual admiration and respect. The sailors help the soldiers, who are not versed in this semi-nautical warfare, in a dozen little ways. You see bluejackets showing the men, heavily laden with their kits and rifles, how to climb rope ladders which have been fixed to the sides of the ships to facilitate the task of rapid disembarkation; you see them teaching the soldiers to row and handle the boats, and how to bring them alongside. Others will be giving instruction in the art of correct steering, or how to handle boathooks. The entente between the two services is complete. The troops pass the time cooped up on the transports in every form of military exercise, and they will land in perfect condition, and very well trained for their peculiar task. In the afternoons large parties row round the Fleet on "joy-rides," visiting the warships, where they are always sure of a hearty welcome.

What can I say about the Army? It is no ordinary body of men. It is essentially Imperial in its composition, and only the British Empire could have brought together such a force from all corners of the earth. Also the majority of the men are volunteers and Colonials. It is the great counter-attack of Australia against the enemy in the East whilst our regular armies are holding the line so gallantly in the West. Nevertheless, in spite of our immense efforts in France and Belgium, we have a seasoning of our regular army, which will fight side by side with the lads from "down under."

I do not suppose that any country in its palmiest days ever sent forth to the field of battle a finer body of men than these Australian, New Zealand and Tasmanian troops. Physically they are the finest lot of men I have ever seen in any part of the world. In fact, I had no idea that such a race of giants existed in the twentieth century. Some of their battalions average 5 ft. 10 in.,

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and every man seems to be a trained athlete. The flood of volunteers to the colours was so great that thousands had to be rejected and only the most perfect selected. There are doctors, lawyers, civil engineers, gentlemen of independent means, farmers, cowboys and miners in the ranks ready to fight side by side, each carrying his seventy-odd pounds of equipment and ammunition as if he had been born with it on his back. Many have left lucrative professions bringing in thousands a year to fight for the Mother Country at the King's wage.

High Standard of Training

Their discipline is different from what we are accustomed to at home. There is not that social line of demarcation between the officers and the men. Many of the privates hold better positions in civil life than their officers. Yet there does not seem to be any friction, and the discipline is excellent, arising as it does rather from a mutual understanding between all ranks than from a written code which has been ingrained in the blood for centuries. Of course, it is not to be expected that either officers or men have such a deep knowledge of their profession as some of our regular troops, but the level of intelligence in the ranks is so fine that even after the comparatively short time the battalions have been raised the standard of training is very high. Above all else, you feel you are in the presence of a body of men who are absolutely sincere and absolutely determined to carry through the great and honourable task which has been assigned to them to a successful conclusion, or else to leave their bones on Ottoman soil. There is none of the "picnic spirit" about these Australians, Tasmanians and New Zealanders. They know what they are up against, and do not think they have been

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dragged from their homes by false pretences. They are spoiling for a fight in order to prove they are worthy to fight side by side with the heroes of Mons, Ypres and Neuve Chapelle. Many of them were disappointed in Egypt, and their only fear is that at the eleventh hour they may have a walk-over here. But there is not much chance of that. Every man should be assured of enough fighting to satisfy the most truculent before we can call the Narrows our own.

Truly this is a heterogeneous force which has been brought together for the last crusade. Many types and many races and many interests, which have often in the past been divergent, are represented. There are regular battalions from outlying stations of the Empire, a few weeks ago separated by thousands of miles of water, now lying side by side in Mudros Bay; there are Naval Volunteers from England, men of all ranks and all professions who have flocked to the colours, determined to join something, even if they had no personal qualifications; there are battalions of Marine Reserves, most of them with wives and families at home; there are Australians, New Zealanders and Tasmanians, and Indians; there are Frenchmen, Zouaves and dark-skinned Senegalese, and Colonial infantry. Other types are here, but I have not yet had the chance of seeing them all.

The Sea Spectacle

Then the fleet of warships and transports. Will the world ever see such a spectacle again—such a motley collection of types stretching back for well-nigh thirty years or even more? The mighty *Queen Elizabeth* is our flagship, and the equally mighty spirit of the Great Queen seems to animate every man afloat on warship or transport.

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There is the Dreadnought cruiser *Inflexible*. Then we come to that long line of pre-Dreadnought battleships, headed by the *Agamemnon* and *Lord Nelson*, followed in periods ranging back to the year 1900 by the *Queen*, *London*, *Prince of Wales*, *Implacable* and *Cornwallis*. Then two good ships, purchased at the time of the Russo-Japanese War—the *Swiftsure* and the *Triumph*.

We are carried back into the 'nineties by the *Albion*, *Majestic*, *Canopus*, *Vengeance*, *Goliath* and *Prince George*. These old pre-Dreadnought battleships, which were pronounced to be out of date when war broke out, are ending their careers gloriously in Eastern waters. Many of these ships have spent month after month patrolling the Channel, exposed to submarine attack, their officers and crews feeling all the time that when the Germans did put to sea they would only be called upon to play a secondary rôle, or even go through the whole war without firing a shot.

Now, as if by a stroke of the enchanter's wand, they find themselves engaged in a glorious enterprise of extreme danger and difficulty, which will stamp the names of all indelibly on the pages of history if it succeeds, whilst, if it fails, many will have died game, with their colours still flying, knowing well that before peace is signed they will have been avenged.

No longer do they envy the lot of their comrades who man the Grand Fleet, which is keeping up its incessant watch on German shores. They are sorry for them, and would not change places with the finest Dreadnought afloat. Supporting our great fleet of pre-Dreadnoughts are the old French battleships, the *Charlemagne*, *Jauréguiberry*, *Gaulois*, *Suffren* and *Henri IV*. They date back to the early 'nineties, the veteran of the fleet being the old high-sided, round-bodied *Jauréguiberry*, now in her twenty-third year.

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Infinite Variety

These ships are of a period when French constructors seem to have had no fixed design in mind. They look strange indeed alongside the *Queen Elizabeth* and our pre-Dreadnoughts. The *Henri IV* is a never-failing subject for interest and comment to both soldiers and sailors. From her low freeboard astern, scarcely a foot above the water, there rises a series of towers and turrets and storeys, giving her the appearance rather of an ancient castle than a warship.

To support the battleships we have a powerful fleet of cruisers, the *Bacchante*, *Euryalus*, *Dartmouth*, *Dublin*, *Talbot*, *Doris* and *Minerva*, and the five-funnelled Russian *Askold*, which escaped, with four of her funnels, to Shanghai, accompanied by the battleship *Tsarevitch*, after the battle of Round Island on August 10, 1904, when the Russian fleet made its last abortive sortie from Port Arthur. How times have changed. Within a cable length of the *Askold* are the *Triumph* and *Swiftsure*. Behind the cruisers are our eight depôt and repair ships, numerous destroyers, torpedo craft and submarines.

This is a great fleet of infinite variety, but what of the transports which have been collected together from all parts of the world to carry the crusaders to Gallipoli and Constantinople? From the quarter-deck I can see many familiar names of famous liners which have carried the British flag in every ocean and every sea. The list of their names alone would give a sufficient idea of the extent and variety of the mercantile marine resources at the disposal of the Allies, and of how completely the enemy's flag has disappeared from the high seas.

By day this spectacle is grand, as this immense fleet lies in the great bay on a surface as smooth as glass, with innumerable flags flying, and the smoke rising

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quietly from hundreds of eager funnels. At night thousands of lights sparkle from the water, and the signals heliographed by electric lamps twinkle like the stars above. In a few days this immense armada will be launched to its fate, either to meet a second Salamis, or to carry the crusaders once more victoriously to Byzantium after 462 years of Ottoman misrule. Whatever happens in the future, nothing can ever eliminate from the mind the majestic splendour of the scene in Mudros Bay.

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CHAPTER V

"WAITING FOR THE SIGNAL"

April 21

THE whole expedition is still assembling in Mudros Bay, and we are waiting every hour for the signal to start. There are, however, so many details to be worked out, and so many important matters to be considered, that no one knows when the naval and military authorities will have completed their final arrangements.

Up to yesterday, Tuesday, April 20, for eight days the weather has been perfect for landing operations on a large scale. There has been no wind, it has been delightfully warm, and the sea as calm as an inland lake. Now, just when every one was hoping we were about to start, the weather has broken. Yesterday a strong east wind arose and a considerable sea got up, in the face of which it would have been impossible to land troops, even had the authorities been ready to start. To-day there is still a wind and heavy rain, and a considerable sea. Therefore, it will be impossible to do anything until the conditions improve and we are assured of several days of comparative calm.

The weather this spring in the Mediterranean is playing strange tricks. The winter was very mild and calm, but a Naval Reserve officer who has spent many years in Eastern waters tells me he has never known such an unsettled April. This sudden break in the weather is discouraging, because the moon is getting fuller every night, and if we attempt a surprise with the first landing

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parties it is essential to have a dark night. However, those who know the Mediterranean hope that this wild storm will be succeeded by an unbroken period of calm long enough to allow of the whole army and its munitions and guns being safely got ashore. If the weather goes on playing these unnatural tricks it will add enormously to the difficulties and responsibilities of the admirals and generals. For instance, had we put the first landing parties ashore last Sunday and Monday they would have been cut off from all supports owing to the gale which sprang up yesterday. They might have held their positions covered by the guns of the ships, but the enemy would meanwhile have had ample warning, and could have brought up any reinforcements available with which to oppose a further advance. These contingencies may arrive in the future, and have to be provided against as far as human ingenuity will allow.

Landing Plans

It seems to be the general opinion that the success or failure of these operations will be decided in the first twenty-four hours. That is to say, if the original selected landing parties are able to carry at the first rush the positions which the military authorities consider must be held to allow of the disembarkation of the main army and its guns and munitions, then all will be well. There are others, however, who do not anticipate much trouble in landing, but who think the army will be up against a much stiffer proposition when it moves inland away from the coast to try and seize the coast up to the Narrows. Although the final plans are kept a profound secret, it is now known that the disembarkation will take place at several points simultaneously, and that each will, of course, be covered by the guns of the ships. The original landing parties, those to which are assigned the rôle of

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rushing positions which must be held to allow of the disembarkation of the remainder, will be landed from warships, and have been practised daily for their task.

The warships have been divided into several divisions, each under a separate commander, and the divisions are divided in turn into landing ships and covering ships. That is to say, some will carry troops and will move close in to put them ashore in their boats, which will be towed by steam pinnaces, whilst the covering ships will keep further out and endeavour to dominate any artillery the enemy may bring into action, and also to shell his infantry entrenchments.

Every evening for some days past we have had a full-dress rehearsal of embarking and disembarking at night time from the warships which are to convey the covering force ashore. At dusk about 600 Australians are brought on board, and stay there until after dark. They are then formed up by companies on places which have been painted and numbered on the quarter-deck. Each company has a separate wooden ladder by which it must descend to its particular boat. When all are aboard, the steam pinnace takes the boats in tow and conveys them to the shore, when they disembark, form up, and rush some selected position in absolute quiet. The men are then practised in digging shelter trenches in the dark, and are afterwards rapidly re-embarked and conveyed back to the transports.

"Keen as Mustard"

Sir Ian Hamilton generally manages to snatch the time from his heavy labours to have a short walk on shore most days. Yesterday when I met him he was full of praise for the Australians, whom he considers a magnificent lot of men, and as keen as mustard for the job. He told me he considered they had reached

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a very high standard of efficiency, especially in these landing operations, which require great rapidity, good discipline, and, above all, no noise. In fact, the general, who himself looks very fit, is delighted with the spirit and efficiency of the troops under his command. The Australians, of course, have their grumbles, like all other soldiers. They are very weary of being cooped up on board the transports, where many of them have been, off and on, with brief intervals ashore, for six weeks past.

Life under these conditions is no bed of roses, especially when the ships are crowded and the weather hot. Although food is plentiful, luxuries, which make so much difference to the soldier's temper, are becoming scarcer and scarcer. Tobacco, cigarettes and cigars are running very low. On many of the transports whisky and beer have become exhausted, and wines and spirits are quite unobtainable. Now these Australians like their drink, and are accustomed to it. Thus they are anxious to get ashore and stretch their limbs in a real fight, when these temporary discomforts will be forgotten. In a letter one of them wrote home the other day the following was found by the censor: "We are having an iron time; we live in an iron ship, sleep on an iron floor, have nothing to eat but our iron rations, and now, to crown all, I hear we are commanded by a fellow called 'Iron Hamilton.'"

Everybody is, in fact, getting very weary of the suspense of waiting, and it will be a happy moment when the order is given to start. An expedition of this sort gives endless scope for originality, and the invention of ingenious devices to assist the landing of troops and stores. All these suggestions and inventions are carefully considered by the authorities. We are almost within sight of the plains of Troy, and although we cannot have our wooden horse filled with eager warriors

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to take the enemy by surprise, we are going to have a ship which will be utilised in much the same manner.

There is a vessel here called the *River Clyde*, which just escaped from Smyrna at the outbreak of war. She has been painted a khaki colour, which is hard to distinguish from the beach round the mouth of the Dardanelles. Her decks and machinery have been protected by sandbags, and great doors have been cut in her sides. She is to be filled up with as many soldiers as she can carry, and then she will be run on shore and left as high and dry as circumstances will permit. The troops will be disembarked on pontoons if the water is too deep to allow them to wade. In this manner 2000 should be got ashore in a minimum of time. The *River Clyde* will then play another important rôle if she is not knocked out by the enemy's guns. She has powerful condensing machinery on board, which can turn out forty tons of fresh water a day, and this supply will be used for the army if they find a scarcity on Gallipoli, or if the Turks have tampered with the springs—an idea the Germans are almost certain to give them. A number of machine guns will also be disembarked from her.

The Work to Do

By the time this letter reaches England the efficiency of all the arrangements which have been made to ensure success will have been put to the test. If the expedition fails, we must accept the inevitable with the best grace possible under the circumstances. This is not a question of "If at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again," because unless enormous reinforcements can be spared from the Western theatre of war, Constantinople will have to be taken from the Black Sea by a Russian army landing in Thrace. We shall have to admit that we

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undertook a task that was beyond our powers with the forces available, and leave it to others, or only strike again when the Russians can co-operate at the Bosphorus. It will not be fair to blame the admirals and generals, who have done everything in their power with the ships men and material at their disposal. But, judged from any standpoint, the task involves enormous difficulties.

We have to land an army in the face of an enemy who has had ample warning ever since February 19 that he may expect such an attempt. We have to put on shore food, water, guns, horses, munitions, ammunition, and all the thousand odd things necessary to keep an army in the field, besides making arrangements to remove a large number of wounded and sick. In this we are very largely dependent on the state of the weather, which, if if continues capricious, may leave one part of our army ashore, whilst the remainder and the supplies are held off the coast by a rough sea. Again, an army which has perforce been kept on transports for a long period cannot have the manœuvring efficiency of an army which has been trained and handled by its generals on land. The command will also be a very difficult one to exercise, and will depend largely on the efficiency of the leaders of brigades, as when the army is finally ashore at various points, widely separated, the headquarters staff will only be able to exercise a very general control.

I do not believe we can hope to surprise the Turks, led as they are by German officers, by the sudden arrival of this huge force off the shores of Gallipoli. We may effect a local night surprise, and that is all. You cannot keep the news of the assembly of a huge expedition such as this from leaking out in the East. The news of the concentration of this mass of warships and transports in Mudros Bay has undoubtedly found its way by a hundred different channels to Constantinople. Neither

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can we overlook the fact that the enemy is fighting for his very existence, and will therefore bring every available man and gun into the field. The moment the first British ship is past the Narrows, the Turkish Empire in Europe has ceased to exist. No one knows this better than the Turks themselves. Had they their own way they would probably prefer to make an eleventh-hour peace rather than put this tremendous issue, affecting as it does their very existence as an independent nation, to the test. But they know they have gone too far, and can only expect terms which would leave them very little better off than if they lose all by fighting. Therefore they must fight, and stand or fall by the result. They are in a desperate position, and may be expected to fight like desperate men.

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CHAPTER VI

THE STORY OF THE LANDING

April 24

THE great venture has at last been launched, and the entire fleet of warships and transports is now steaming slowly towards the shores of Gallipoli. Yesterday the weather showed signs of moderating, and at about five o'clock in the afternoon the first of the transports slowly made its way through the maze of shipping towards the entrance of Mudros Bay.

Immediately the patent apathy which has gradually overwhelmed every one changed to the utmost enthusiasm, and, as the huge liners steamed through the Fleet, their decks yellow with khaki, the crews of the warships cheered them on to victory whilst the bands played them out with an unending variety of popular airs. The soldiers on the transports answered this last salutation from the Navy with deafening cheers, and no more inspiring spectacle has ever been seen than this of the last great crusade setting forth for better or for worse.

SPLENDID ORGANISATION

It required splendid organisation and skilled leadership to get this huge fleet clear of the bay without confusion or accidents, but not one has occurred, and the majority are now safely on the high seas steaming towards their respective destinations.

The whole of the Fleet and the transports have been divided up into five divisions, and there will be three

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main landings. The 29th Division will disembark off the point of the Gallipoli Peninsula, near Seddul Bahr, where its operations can be protected both from the Gulf of Saros and from the Dardanelles by the fire of the covering warships. The Australian and New Zealand contingent will disembark north of Gaba Tepe. Further north the Naval Division will make a demonstration.

The difficulties and dangers of the enterprise are enormous, and are recognised by all. Never before has the attempt been made to land so large a force in the face of an enemy who has innumerable guns, many thousands of trained infantry, and who has had months of warning in which to prepare his positions. Nevertheless, there is a great feeling of confidence throughout all ranks, and the men are delighted that at length the delays are over and the real work is about to begin.

Start of the Armada

Last night the transports were merely taking up their positions, and the real exit of the armada from Mudros Bay commenced this afternoon at about two o'clock. The weather, which was threatening at an early hour, has now become perfectly calm, and if it only lasts the conditions will be ideal for a rapid disembarkation. Throughout the morning transports steamed out to take up their respective positions in the open sea, and the same enthusiastic scenes were witnessed as of yesterday. The covering forces will be put ashore from certain battleships, whilst others will sweep the enemy's positions with their guns and endeavour to prevent them from shelling the troops whilst disembarking.

It is generally considered that the critical period of the operations will be the first twenty-four hours, and the success or failure of the whole enterprise will depend on whether these covering parties are able to obtain a

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firm foothold and seize the positions which have been assigned to them. Every detail has been worked out and rehearsed, and every officer and man should now know the particular rôle which has been assigned to him.

The Navy will have entire charge of the landing of these thousands of men. Beach parties will go ashore with the first of the troops, and officers from the ships will direct the movements of all the boats as they bring the troops ashore.

This battleship belongs to the division which will consist of the Australians, who are to land near Gaba Tepe. We are one of the landing ships, and this afternoon received on board 500 officers and men of the Australian contingent, who are to form part of the covering force. They are a magnificent body of men, and full of enthusiasm for the honourable and dangerous rôle given them.

Splendid Spectacle

At two o'clock the flagship of this division took up her position at the head of the line. We passed down through the long line of slowly moving transports, amidst tremendous cheering, and were played out of the bay by the French warships. No sight could have been finer than this spectacle of long lines of warships and transports, each making for a special rendezvous, without any delay or confusion. At four o'clock this afternoon the ship's company and the troops were assembled on the quarter-deck to hear the captain read out Admiral de Robeck's proclamation to the combined forces. This was followed by a last service before battle, in which the chaplain uttered a prayer for victory, and called for the divine blessing on the expedition, whilst the whole of the ship's company and troops on board stood with uncovered and bowed heads.

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We are steaming slowly through this momentous night towards the coast, and are due at our rendezvous at three a.m. to-morrow (Sunday), a day which has so often brought victory to the British flag.

The Covering Force

Slowly through the night of April 24 our squadron, which was to land the covering force of the Australian contingent just north of Gaba Tepe, steamed towards its destination. The troops on board were the guests of the crews, and our generous sailors entertained them royally.

At dusk all lights were extinguished, and very shortly afterwards the troops retired for a last rest before their ordeal at dawn.

It was a beautiful night, lit up by a very bright half-moon, and the sea was absolutely calm. At one a.m. the ships arrived off their appointed rendezvous, five miles from the landing place, and stopped. The soldiers were aroused from their slumbers and were served with a last hot meal.

Cool Australians

A visit to the mess decks showed these Australians, the majority of whom were about to go into action for the first time under the most trying circumstances, which require that four-o'clock-in-the-morning courage, to be cheerful, quiet, and confident. There was no sign of nerves or undue excitement, such as one might very reasonably have expected.

At 1.20 a.m. the signal was given from the flagship to lower the boats, which had been left swinging from the davits throughout the night. Our steam pinnaces were also lowered to take them in tow. The troops fell in in their assigned places on the quarter-deck, and the last rays of the waning moon lit up a scene which will

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ever be memorable in our history. On the quarter-deck, backed by the great twelve-inch guns, this splendid body of Colonial troops were drawn up in serried ranks, fully equipped, and receiving their last instructions from their officers, who, six months ago, like their men, were leading peaceful civilian lives in Australia and New Zealand, thousands of miles away. Now, at the call of the Empire, they were about to disembark on a strange, unknown shore in a foreign land, and attack an enemy of a different race.

Sailors' Landing Party

By the side of the soldiers the beach parties of our splendid bluejackets and marines were marshalled, arrayed in old white uniforms dyed khaki-colour, and carrying the old rifle and old equipment. These men were to take charge of the boats, steer them ashore, and row them to the beach, when they were finally cast off by the towing pinnaces. Each boat was in charge of a young midshipman, many of whom have come straight from Dartmouth, after a couple of terms, and now found themselves called upon to play a most difficult and dangerous rôle like men.

Of the splendid conduct and courage of these youths I shall have much to say later, but it was a strange contrast to see these youthful figures, clad in every kind of garment which could be scraped together for shore work, and carrying revolvers, which appeared almost as big as themselves, standing side by side in the dim light with these giants from Australia.

Commanders, lieutenants, and special beach officers had charge of the whole of the towing parties, and went ashore with the troops.

At 2.5 a.m. the signal was given for the troops to embark in the boats, which were lying alongside, and this

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was carried out with great rapidity, in absolute silence, and without a hitch or an accident of any kind.

Each one of the three ships which had embarked troops transferred them to four tows apiece, consisting of three boats, each towed by a steam pinnace, and in this manner men of the covering force were conveyed to the shore.

More of the Australian brigade were carried in destroyers, which were to go close in shore and land them from boats as soon as those towed by the pinnaces had reached the beach. At three a.m. it was quite dark, and all was ready for the start.

The tows were cast off by the battleships, the ladders taken in, and the decks cleared for action, the crews going to general quarters. Then we steamed slowly towards the shore, each of the battleships being closely followed by her tows, which looked exactly like huge snakes gliding relentlessly after their prey.

I do not suppose the suppressed excitement of this last half-hour will ever be forgotten by those who were present. No one could tell at the last minute what would happen. Would the enemy be surprised, or would he be ready, on the alert to pour a terrible fire on the boats as they approached the beach?

The whole operation had been timed to allow the pinnaces and boats to reach the beach just before daybreak, so that the Turks, if they had been forewarned, would not be able to see to fire before the Australians had obtained a firm footing and, it was hoped, good cover, on the foreshore.

Searchlights Ready

Exactly at 4.10 a.m. the three battleships, in line abreast, four cables apart, arrived about 2,500 yards from the shore, which was just discernible in the gloom.

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The engines were stopped, guns were manned, and the powerful searchlights made ready for use if required.

The tows, which up to this time had followed astern, were ordered to advance to the shore. The battleships took up positions somewhat further out on either flank, for to them was assigned the duty of supporting the attack with their guns as soon as the light allowed.

Very slowly the twelve snakes of boats steamed past the battleships, the gunwales almost flush with the water, so crowded were they with khaki figures. Then each lot edged in towards another so as to reach the beach four cables apart. So anxious were we on board the battleships that it seemed as if the loads were too heavy for the pinnaces, or that some mysterious power was holding them back, and that they would never reach the shore before daybreak, and thus lose the chance of a surprise. The distance between the battleships and the boats did not seem to increase, but only for the reason that we steamed very slowly in after them, until the water gradually shallowed.

Landing in the Dark

Every eye and every glass was fixed on that grim-looking line of hills in front, so shapeless, yet so menacing in the gloom, the mysteries of which those in the boats, which looked so tiny and helpless, were about to solve. Yet for some time not a sound and not a light was heard or seen; it appeared as if the enemy had been completely surprised and that we would get ashore without opposition. The stars, showing above the dark outline of the hills, were frequently mistaken for lights in our nervy state. On the bridge a sharp-eyed signalman would suddenly call out, "There's a light on shore, sir," but then, after a brief examination it would be pronounced a star, and the discoverer would retire in confusion.

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The progress of the boats was, indeed, slow, and dawn was rapidly breaking, so that at one time it did appear as if they would never land covered by the darkness. Something definite did happen. Exactly at 4.50 a.m. the enemy suddenly showed an alarm light, which flashed for ten minutes, and then disappeared. The next three minutes after its appearance passed in breathless anxiety; we could just discern the dull outline of the boats, which appeared to be almost on the beach.

Just previously to this, seven destroyers, conveying the other men of the brigade, glided noiselessly through the intervals between the battleships, and followed the boats inshore.

Enemy's First Shot

At 4.53 a.m. there suddenly came a very sharp burst of rifle-fire from the beach, and we knew our men were at last at grips with the enemy. I believe the sound came as a relief to the majority, as the suspense of this prolonged waiting had become intolerable. This fire lasted only for a few minutes and then was drowned by a faint British cheer, wafted to us over the waters. How comforting and inspiring was the sound at such a moment! It seemed like a message sent to tell us that the first position had been won and a firm hold obtained on the beach.

At 5.3 a.m. the fire intensified, and we could tell, from the sound, that our men were firing. It lasted until 5.28, and then died down somewhat. No one on board knew what was happening, although the dawn was gradually breaking, because we were looking due east, into the sun, slowly rising behind the hills, which are almost flush with the foreshore, and there was also a haze.

Astern, at 5.26, we saw the outline of some of the transports, gradually growing bigger and bigger as they

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approached the coast. They were bringing up the remainder of the Australians and New Zealand division.

The first authentic news we received came with the return of our boats. A steam pinnace came alongside with two recumbent forms on her deck, and a small figure, pale but cheerful, and waving his hand, astern.

They were one of our midshipmen, just sixteen years of age, shot through the stomach, but regarding his injury more as a fitting consummation to a glorious holiday ashore than a wound, and a chief stoker and petty officer, all three wounded by that first burst of musketry, which caused many casualties in the boats just as they reached the beach.

From them we learnt what had happened in those first wild moments. All the tows had almost reached the beach, when a party of Turks, entrenched almost on the shore, opened up a terrible fusillade from rifles, and also from a maxim. Fortunately, most of the bullets went high, but, nevertheless, many men were hit as they sat huddled together, forty or fifty in a boat.

A Trying Moment

It was a trying moment, but the Australian volunteers rose as a man to the occasion. They waited neither for orders nor for the boats to reach the beach, but, springing out into the sea, they waded ashore, and, forming some sort of a rough line, rushed straight on the flashes of the enemy's rifles.

Their magazines were not even charged, so they just went in with cold steel, and I believe I am right in saying that the first Ottoman Turk since the last crusade received an Anglo-Saxon bayonet in him at five minutes after five a.m. on April 25.

It was over in a minute. The Turks in this first trench were bayoneted or ran away, and a maxim gun was

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captured. Then the Australians found themselves facing an almost perpendicular cliff of loose sandstone, covered with thick shrubbery, and somewhere half-way up the enemy had a second trench, strongly held, from which they poured a terrible fire on the troops below and the boats pulling back to the destroyers for the second landing party.

Here was a tough proposition to tackle in the darkness, but these Colonials are practical above all else, and they went about it in a practical way. They stopped a few moments to pull themselves together and to get rid of their packs, which no troops should carry in an attack, and then charged their magazines.

Then this race of athletes proceeded to scale the cliffs without responding to the enemy's fire. They lost some men, but did not worry, and in less than a quarter of an hour the Turks were out of their second position, either bayoneted or in full flight.

Blessing in Disguise

After the events I have previously described the light gradually became better, and we could see from the *London* what was happening on the beach. The shore in front gradually opened up as the sun rose, although, shining as it did directly in the eyes of the ship's gunners, they were not in a position to support the attack in the early hours of the morning.

It was then discovered that the boats had landed rather further north of Gaba Tepe than was originally intended, at a point where the sandstone cliffs rise very sheer from the water's edge. As a matter of fact this error probably turned out a blessing in disguise, because there was no glacis down which the enemy's infantry could fire, and the numerous bluffs, ridges, and broken

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ground afford good cover to troops once they have passed the forty or fifty yards of flat sandy beach.

This ridge, under which the landing was made, stretches due north from Gaba Tepe and culminates in the height of Coja Chemen Dagh, which rises 950 ft. above the sea level. The whole forms part of a confused triangle of hills, valleys, ridges, bluffs, and dales, which stretches right across the Gallipoli Peninsula to the Bay of Bassi Liman, above the Narrows.

The triangle is cut in two by the valley through which flows the stream known as Bokali Deresi. It is indeed a formidable and forbidding land. To the sea it presents a steep front, broken up into innumerable ridges, bluffs, valleys, and sandpits, which rise to a height of several hundred feet. The surface is either a kind of bare yellow sandstone, very soft, which crumbles when you tread on it, or else it is covered with very thick shruberry about 6 ft. in height.

Ideal "Snipers'" Country

It is, in fact, an ideal country for irregular warfare, such as the Australians and New Zealanders were soon to find, to their cost. You cannot see a yard in front of you, and so broken is the ground that the enemy's snipers were able to lie concealed within a few yards of the lines of infantry without it being possible to locate them. On the other hand, the Australians and New Zealanders have proved themselves adepts at this form of warfare, which requires the display of great endurance in climbing over the cliffs, and offers scope for a display of that individuality which you find highly developed in these Colonial volunteers.

To organise anything like a regular attack on such ground is almost impossible, as the officers cannot see

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their men, who, the moment they move forward in open order, are lost amongst the thick scrub.

In the early part of the day very heavy casualties were suffered in the boats which conveyed the troops from the destroyers, tugs, and transports to the beach.

As soon as it became light the enemy's sharpshooters hidden everywhere simply concentrated their fire on the boats when they got close in. At least three boats, having broken away from their tows, drifted down the coast under no control, sniped at the whole way, and steadily losing men.

All praise is due to the splendid conduct of the officers, midshipmen, and men who formed the beach parties, and whose duty it was to pass backwards and forwards under this terrible fusillade, which it was impossible to check in the early part of the day. The work of disembarking went on mechanically under this fire at almost point-blank range.

Gallant Boats' Crews

You saw the crowded boats cast off from the pinnaces, tugs, and destroyers, and laboriously pulled ashore by six or eight seamen. The moment it reached the beach the troops jumped out and doubled for cover to the foot of the bluffs over some forty yards of beach, but the gallant crews of the boats had then to pull them out under a dropping fire from a hundred points where the enemy's marksmen lay hidden amidst the sand and shrubs.

Throughout the whole of April 25 the landing of troops, stores, and munitions had to be carried out under these conditions, but the gallant sailors never failed their equally gallant comrades ashore. Every one, from the youngest midshipman straight from Dartmouth and under fire for the first time to the senior officers in charge did their duty nobly.

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When it became light the covering warships endeavoured to support the troops on shore by a heavy fire from their secondary armament, but at this time, the positions of the enemy being unknown, the support was necessarily more moral than real. When the sun was fully risen and the haze had disappeared, we could see that the Australians had actually established themselves on the top of the ridge, and were evidently trying to work their way northwards along it.

At 8.45 a.m. the fire from the hills became intense, and lasted for about half an hour, when it gradually died down, but only for a short time; then it reopened and lasted without cessation throughout the remainder of the day.

The fighting was so confused and took place amongst such broken ground that it is extremely difficult to follow exactly what did happen throughout the morning and afternoon of April 25.

The Further Landings

The rôle assigned to the covering force was splendidly carried out up to a certain point, and a firm footing obtained on the crest of the ridge, which allowed the disembarkation of the remainder of the force to go on uninterruptedly except for the never-ceasing sniping; but then the Australians, whose blood was up, instead of entrenching themselves and waiting developments, rushed northward and eastward inland in search of fresh enemies to tackle with the bayonet.

The ground is so broken and ill defined that it was very difficult to select a position to entrench, especially as, after the troops imagined they had cleared a section, they were continually being sniped from all sides. Therefore they preferred to continue the advance.

It is impossible for any army to defend a long beach

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in any force, especially when you do not know exactly where an attack will be made, and when your troops will come under the fire of the guns of warships.

The Turks, therefore, had only a comparatively weak force actually holding the beach, and they seemed to have relied on the difficult nature of the ground and their scattered snipers to delay the advance until they brought up reinforcements from the interior. Some of the Australians, who had pushed inland, were attacked and almost outflanked by these oncoming reserves, and had to fall back, after suffering very heavy casualties. It was then the turn of the Turks to counter-attack, and this they continued to do throughout the afternoon.

But the Australians never yielded a foot of ground on the main ridge, and reinforcements were continually poured up from the beach as fresh troops were disembarked from the transports; but the enemy's artillery fire presented a very difficult problem.

As soon as the light became good the Turks enfiladed the beach with two field guns from Gaba Tepe, and with two others from the north. This shrapnel fire was incessant and deadly. In vain did the warships endeavour to put them out of action with their secondary armament. For some hours they could not be accurately located, or else were so well protected that our shells failed to do them any harm.

Deadly Shrapnel

The majority of the heavy casualties suffered during the day were from shrapnel, which swept the beach and the ridge on which Australians and New Zealanders had established themselves. Later in the day the two guns to the north were silenced or forced to withdraw to a fresh position from which they could no longer enfilade the beach, and a cruiser, moving in close to the shore, so

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plastered Gaba Tepe with a hail of shell that the guns there were also silenced, and have not attempted to reply since. As the enemy brought up reinforcements towards dusk his attacks became more and more vigorous, and he was supported by a powerful artillery inland, which the ships' guns were powerless to deal with.

The pressure on the Australians and New Zealanders became heavier and heavier, and the line they were occupying had to be contracted for the night.

General Birdwood and his staff went ashore in the afternoon, and devoted all their energies to securing the position, so as to hold firmly to it until the following morning, when it was hoped to get some field guns in position to deal with the enemy's artillery.

Some idea of the difficulty to be faced may be gathered when it is remembered that every round of ammunition, all water, and all supplies had to be landed on a narrow beach and then carried up pathless hills, valleys, and bluffs several hundred feet high to the firing line. The whole of this mass of troops, concentrated on a very small area, and unable to reply, were exposed to a relentless and incessant shrapnel fire, which swept every yard of the ground, although, fortunately, a great deal of it was badly aimed or burst too high.

Courageous Wounded

The reserves were engaged in road-making and carrying supplies to the crests, and in answering the calls for more ammunition.

A serious problem was getting away the wounded from the shore, where it was impossible to keep them. All those who were unable to hobble to the beach had to be carried down from the hills on stretchers, then hastily dressed and carried to the boats. The boat and

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beach parties never stopped working throughout the entire day and night. The courage displayed by these wounded Australians will never be forgotten. Hastily dressed and placed in trawlers, lighters, and ships' boats, they were towed to the ships. I saw some lighters full of bad cases as they passed the battleship. Some of those on board recognised her as the ship they had left that morning, whereupon, in spite of their sufferings and discomforts, they set up a cheer, which was answered by a deafening shout of encouragement from our crew.

I have, in fact, never seen the like of these wounded Australians in war before, for as they were towed amongst the ships whilst accommodation was being found for them, although many were shot to bits and without hope of recovery, their cheers resounded through the night, and you could just see, amidst a mass of suffering humanity, arms being waved in greeting to the crews of the warships. They were happy because they knew they had been tried for the first time in the war and had not been found wanting.

They had been told to occupy the heights and hold on, and this they had done for fifteen mortal hours, under an incessant shell fire, without the moral and material support of a single gun ashore, and subjected the whole time to the violent counter-attack of a brave enemy, led by skilled leaders, whilst his snipers, hidden in caves and thickets and amongst the dense shrub, made a deliberate practice of picking off every officer who endeavoured to give a word of command or to lead his men forward.

No finer feat of arms has been performed during the war than this sudden landing in the dark, this storming of the heights, and, above all, the holding on to the position thus won whilst reinforcements were being poured from the transports. These raw Colonial troops in those desperate hours proved themselves worthy to fight side

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by side with the heroes of Mons and the Aisne, Ypres, and Neuve Chapelle.

Repeated Attacks

Throughout the night of the 25th and the early morning of the 26th there was continual fighting, as the Turks made repeated attacks to endeavour to drive the Australians and New Zealanders from their positions.

On several occasions parties of the Colonials made local counter-attacks, and drove the enemy off with the bayonet, which the Turks will never face.

On the morning of the 26th it became known that the enemy had been very largely reinforced during the night, and was preparing for a big assault from the north-east. This movement began about half-past nine a.m. From the ships we could see large numbers of the enemy creeping along the top of the hills, endeavouring to approach our positions under cover, and then annoy our troops with their continual sniping. He had also brought up more guns during the night, and plastered the whole position once again with shrapnel. The rifle and machine gun fire became heavy and unceasing.

But the enemy were not going to be allowed to have matters all their own way with their artillery.

Seven warships had moved in close to the shore, whilst the *Queen Elizabeth*, farther out, acted as a kind of chaperone to the lot. Each covered a section of the line, and when the signal was given, opened up a bombardment of the heights and valleys beyond which can only be described as terrific. As the Turkish infantry moved forward to the attack, they were met by every kind of shell which our warships carry, from 15-in. shrapnel from the *Queen Elizabeth*, each one of which contains 20,000 bullets, to 12-in., 6-in., and 12-pounders.

The noise, smoke and concussion produced was unlike

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anything you can ever imagine until you have heard and seen it. The hills in front looked as if they had been transformed into smoking volcanoes, the common shell throwing up great chunks of ground and masses of black smoke, whilst the shrapnel formed a white canopy above. Sections of ground were covered by each ship all around our front trenches, and, the ranges being known, the shooting was excellent.

Nevertheless, a great deal of the fire was of necessity indirect, and the ground affords such splendid cover that the Turks continued their advance in a most gallant manner, whilst their artillery not only plastered our positions on shore with shrapnel, but actually tried to drive the ships off the coast by firing at them, whilst their desperate snipers, in place of a better target, tried to pick off officers and men on the decks and bridges. We picked up many bullets on the deck afterwards.

Unique Scene

An enemy warship started to fire over the peninsula. The *Triumph* dropped two 10-in. shells within a few yards of her, whereupon she retired up the straits to a safer position, from which she occasionally drops a few shells into the brown, but so far has done no damage.

The scene at the height of this engagement was sombre, magnificent and unique. The day was perfectly clear, and you could see right down the coast as far as Seddul Bahr. There the warships of the First Division were blazing away at Aki Baba, and the hills around it, covering their summits with a great white cloud of bursting shells.

Farther out the giant forms of the transports which accompanied that division loomed up through the slight mist.

Almost opposite Gaba Tepe a battleship and a cruiser

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close in shore were covering the low ground with their guns, and occasionally dropping shells right over into the straits on the far side. Opposite the hills in possession of the Australian and New Zealand troops other ships kept up an incessant fire, the ships themselves being enveloped in great rolling clouds of cordite. Beyond lay our transports, which had moved farther out to avoid the Turkish warships' shells and those of some battery which fires persistently; beyond all, the splendid silhouette of the *Queen Elizabeth*, with her eight huge, monstrous 15-in. guns, all pointed shorewards, seemed to threaten immediate annihilation to any enemy who dared even aim at the squadron under her charge.

Two Hours Attack

On shore the rifle and machine gun fire was incessant, and at times rose into a perfect storm as the Turks pressed forward their attack. The hills were ablaze with shells from the ships and the enemy's shrapnel, whilst on the beach masses of troops were waiting to take their places in the trenches, and the beach parties worked incessantly at landing stores, material and ammunition.

This great attack lasted some two hours, and during this time we received encouraging messages from the beach: "Thanks for your assistance; your guns are inflicting awful losses on the enemy."

The Turks must, in fact, have suffered terribly from this concentrated fire from so many guns, and from the infantry in the trenches. The end came with a flash of bayonets and a sudden charge of the Colonials, before which the Turks broke and fled, amidst a perfect tornado of shells from the ships.

They fell back, sullen and checked, though not yet defeated, but for the remainder of the day no big attack

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was pressed home, and the Colonials gained some ground by local counter-attacks, which enlarged and consolidated the position they were holding.

The Turks kept up their incessant shrapnel fire throughout the day, but the Colonials were now dug in, and could not be shaken by it in their trenches, whilst the reserves had also prepared shelter trenches and dug-outs on the slopes.

Some prisoners were captured, including an officer, who said the Turks were becoming demoralised by the fire of the guns, and the Germans now had difficulty in getting them forward to the attack. We are well entrenched, and they will probably do likewise, and we shall see a repetition of the siege warfare out here.

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CHAPTER VII

FUTILE TURKISH ATTACKS ON COLONIAL TROOPS

April 28

THROUGHOUT the night of April 26 the Turks harassed our lines, creeping up and endeavouring to snipe the Australians and New Zealanders in their shelter trenches, but never daring to press home an attack, although in overwhelming numbers compared to our force ashore. At one section of the line they paid dearly for their temerity, for the New Zealanders charged them with the bayonet and drove them off in disorder.

It was obvious on the morning of the 27th that the Turks had not recovered from the terrible hammering they had received on the previous day, and had no stomach for another big attack on the entrenchments now firmly established on a semicircular front which covered the whole of the foreshore which is being used for the disembarkation of troops, supplies, guns and ammunition, supported by the fire of many warships.

Also the position of the Colonials had been immeasurably improved by the landing of some of our field guns and several Indian mountain batteries.

TURKS DISILLUSIONED

The Turks had evidently intended to drive us into the sea on the previous day by a great concentration of infantry, supported by an unceasing shrapnel fire,

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expecting to find a line thinly held by men exhausted by their losses and exertions on the day of landing.

But they were soon disillusioned, for these Australians and New Zealanders were determined from the first rather to die to a man than surrender the ground so dearly won on April 25, and every man knew that his only hope of safety lay in victory, as it would have been impossible to re-embark the whole army once the ring of hills commanding the beach had been lost.

Most of the troops were under fire for the first time, and the volunteers, with only a few months' training behind them, feel their losses very much at the beginning, more especially if they occur before they have had time to settle down and to become accustomed to their new surroundings in the field.

But these Australians and New Zealanders are an exception to the rule, and although many battalions have losses, the survivors, far from being discouraged, are just as keen and full of fight as ever.

Enemy's New Tactics

On the morning and throughout the entire day of April 27 the enemy resorted to new tactics in the forlorn hope of driving us off the shore, and in order to prevent supplies and reinforcements reaching the beach. During the night he had brought up and got into fresh positions a great number of field guns, and with these he opened up a tremendous bombardment of the foreshore and sea in front, whilst at the same time he kept up an incessant rain of shrapnel on the trenches.

He could no longer enfilade the beach, as every attempt to place guns for this purpose was immediately checkmated by a few well-aimed salvos from the warships. The Turkish gunners tried to put a great curtain

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of shrapnel over the sea between the warships and the transports and the shore.

Great Storm of Shrapnel

It was truly an amazing sight to watch the shells bursting, dozens at a time, above the water, and then the spreading bullets churning up the water as if a great hailstorm had suddenly come on. Some fell far out, being aimed at the warships and transports, without ever making a hit, whilst others, concentrated nearer the shore, made a great danger zone through which all the boats and trawlers to and from the shore had to pass.

But this hail of lead made not the smallest difference to the gallant crews of the pinnaces, boats, lighters and tugs manned by men of the Royal Navy, and in charge of our sub-lieutenants and midshipmen. There was never any hesitation or delay for the storm to moderate. They took just as much notice of this hail of bullets as they would have of a tropical thunderstorm, and although the spectacular effect of the bombardment was extremely fine, the material damage inflicted was practically nil.

Throughout the day the warships kept up an incessant fire on any of the enemy's infantry who attempted to advance and were frequently "spotted" by the hydroplane, which did excellent work. The fire of the warship is an interesting study of scientific gunnery. Every day the ships' gunners become more efficient at this indirect firing on land, and so great is their accuracy at the present time that nothing can live in a section fired at provided the target has been accurately spotted.

Ineffective Turkish Guns

The Turks frequently fire guns of heavy calibre from the other side of the peninsula, hoping to hole a transport, but have never yet succeeded, and if these come

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from a ship in the Straits she is speedily forced to fly up the channel by a salvo or two from the big guns of one of the warships. Our most persistent opponent is a ship which, with her heavy guns, every morning between six and seven fires three or four of her huge shells right amongst us. The scream they make passing through the air, the tremendous splash as they hit the water, and the violent detonation if they happen to burst, arouse every one from their slumbers prematurely, and there is a rush to the deck to see where they have fallen.

Sailors generally find an appropriate name for everything, and this ship is now known throughout the Fleet as " Christians, Arise."

" Folkestone Leas "

The stretch of foreshore and cliffs occupied by the Australians and New Zealand troops has been named the Folkestone Leas, and the ground certainly does bear a striking resemblance to what Folkestone must have looked like before the town was built on the cliffs.

On going ashore through an avalanche of bursting shrapnel you land on a beach about thirty yards wide, between the water and the cliffs, which then rise very steeply for several hundred feet. There are regiments waiting to move to the trenches, fatigue parties unloading boats and lighters, others making great pyramids of tinned meat and biscuits, others fetching water, of which a supply has been found on shore. There are trains of mules endeavouring to drag field guns into position, Indians in charge of mountain guns, dressing stations where the wounded are hastily tended before being piled into barges and sent to the ships, other fatigue parties are laying telegraph and telephone wires, others carrying supplies up the cliffs.

You run across your beach parties from the battle-

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ships, and see young midshipmen who have been working incessantly for days now building themselves a bomb-proof shelter, and complaining that their last one was considered such a perfect model of its kind that some superior officer no sooner saw it than he appropriated it for his own use.

Busy Colonials

Thousands of hardy New Zealanders and Australians are concentrated on this narrow shore, each engaged in some occupation, for no sooner does a man get out of the front trenches than he is required for fatigue work, and very few have had more than a few hours' sleep for days past.

The generals and staff officers fare no better than their men. General Birdwood is high in his opinion of his troops. He told me that he could not praise the courage, endurance and soldierly qualities of his Colonials enough, and said the manner in which they hung on to the position the first day and night was a magnificent feat which has seldom, if ever, been surpassed, considering their very heavy losses, the shortage of water, and the incessant shrapnel fire to which they were exposed without cover, not to mention the unceasing attacks of the enemy's infantry.

That night, when they were obliged to retire to a more contracted line, and when that line was reached, they set their teeth and refused to budge another foot.

A Strange Scene

The whole scene on the beach irresistibly reminds you of a gigantic shipwreck. It looks as if there was not a gun within miles.

These Colonials are extraordinarily cool and callous under fire, often exposing themselves rather than taking

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the trouble to keep in under the shelter of the cliff. One of the strangest sights of all was to see numbers of them bathing in the sea with the shrapnel bursting all around them.

This Colonial colony suddenly planted on the shores of Gallipoli is now assuming a definite form. The whole face of cliffs is being cut away into roads, dugouts, and bombproof shelters. Thus a kind of improvised town is springing up as the troops slowly dig themselves in and make themselves comfortable.

In the Front Trenches

As you climb up the newly made paths to the front trenches you realise some of the difficulties the Australians and New Zealanders had to face when they first advanced from the beach on April 25. We are now holding a semicircular position. The trenches are well made, and provide ample cover, but if you show your head above the parapet for a second you are certain to get a bullet in or close to it.

This incessant sniping is one of the great puzzles of the men in the trenches, and the great problem to deal with at the present time. Apparently even when an advance post is thrown out to hold some commanding point the enemy's sharpshooters remain behind and continue to pick off any unwary man who either through carelessness or indifference exposes himself. Volunteers go out at night and hunt about for these snipers, but up to the present they have not been able to keep them under.

The cheerfulness of the men in the trenches is most marked. They feel that they have overcome the initial difficulties, and have paved the way for success.

These Colonial divisions now occupy a position, and have entrenched it so thoroughly that all the Turks in Thrace and Gallipoli will never turn them out of it.

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CHAPTER VIII

SEDDUL BAHR LANDING

April 30

WHILST the Australians and New Zealanders have been fighting so gallantly against heavy odds north of Gaba Tepe, the British troops have crowned themselves with equal laurels at the southern end of the Gallipoli peninsula.

The story of the landing of the 29th Division, assisted by units of the Naval Division and by the crews of the battleships, is, indeed, a splendid one, and could have only been brought to a successful conclusion by the most devoted heroism and self-sacrifice of our officers and men. But the results justify the sacrifices. A firm foothold has been obtained, and already our line stretches across the southern end of the whole of the peninsula along the lower slopes of the height of Aki Baba, with both its flanks secured by the fire of our warships.

ARMY'S HEAVY TASK

The task before the Army is a heavy one. Our position is now perfectly secure, and the Army holds a fine tract of flat country with many convenient landing places, where troops, stores, munitions and guns can be landed in perfect immunity from the enemy's guns, except for the occasional shelling of some battery on the Asiatic shore.

The problems which the landing parties had to face when landing in Southern Gallipoli were of a different character from those which the Australians successfully

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solved farther north. The cliffs are not high and irregular, but rise from fifty to a hundred feet from the water's edge. In places there is no foreshore, and jagged rocks make a landing impossible, but there are at intervals stretches of beach, and five of these were selected for the disembarkation of troops, each under the covering fire of warships.

Two of these landing places are on the western shore, and are known by the letters Y and X. A third, known as W beach, lies between Cape Teke and Cape Helles. A fourth, known as V beach, is between Cape Helles and the fort and castle of Seddul Bahr, and the fifth, known as S beach, is east of Seddul Bahr in Morto Bay.

Heights of Aki Baba

Once you have climbed the low cliffs at any of these points you find yourself on an open grassy plateau, which stretches inland for about two miles until the ground becomes more hilly and broken as you approach the village of Krithia, and the slopes of the dominating heights of Aki Baba, which rises some 700 feet above the sea. The immediate flat plateau is partly cultivated and partly grass, covered with scattered brushwood.

It was hoped that the trenches would be rendered untenable by the fire of the ships' guns, but these expectations failed to be realised. I shall explain in detail as I describe what happened on each beach, starting from Y on the left and gradually working round the southern point of the peninsula to S beach in Morto Bay.

The landing on Y beach was covered by the cruisers *Dublin*, *Amethyst*, and *Sapphire*. Two battalions and one company were put ashore there. The landing at this point was accomplished without opposition, and the troops obtained a firm footing on the cliff, but when they attempted to advance inland according to the pre-arranged

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plan they encountered a very stiff opposition, and the attacks from W and V beaches being held up on the edge of the coast all day, the troops advancing from Y beach were outflanked and obliged to retire after suffering heavy losses.

It was then decided to re-embark this force on Monday morning, and this was successfully accomplished under a heavy covering fire from the ships' guns.

Battleship Action

The landing on X beach was the most successful of all, as it was carried out without any loss, chiefly owing to the tactics adopted by the landing ship, the *Implacable.*

At dawn the covering ship, the *Swiftsure,* opened up a fierce bombardment of the cliffs above X beach, and then at 5.52 a.m. the *Implacable* herself stood in close to the shore with an anchor down until she actually reached the six fathom limit.

From this, only 500 yards from the shore, she plastered the top of the cliffs with 12-in. shrapnel, and the foreshore with her 6-in. The enemy could not show his head above the cliffs under this terrible storm of shell, and the tows went right in and obtained a firm footing on the edge of the cliff, where they entrenched.

The troops advanced about 1000 yards inland, but were then counter-attacked in great force, and found their right wing exposed owing to the advance from W beach being held up all day. They were also greatly annoyed by a Turkish battery near the village of Krithia, but the position being signalled it was knocked out by the fire of the *Implacable's* guns.

A Desperate Struggle

Nevertheless, in spite of these attacks, the troops from X beach held their ground inland for the whole day,

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but at night the Turks counter-attacked in force, and our men were slowly driven back to the cliffs. Here they hung on all night in a most gallant fashion in shelter trenches, and on the following morning (Monday, April 26) they were once more able to advance.

The cliffs along this stretch are covered with Turkish trenches and bombproof shelters, and they seem to have suffered very little from the previous bombardments, and that which preceded the landing. The ground is cut up into huge craters by the 12-in. and 6-in. shells, but in very few instances have the shells actually destroyed the trenches.

We now come to the desperate struggle which raged all day for W beach and the adjoining hills between Cape Teke and Cape Helles. Here there is a bay with a broad stretch of sand, and the shore recedes, a valley running inland. This sandy beach is commanded on the left by Cape Teke, 100 feet high, and on the right by the continuation of the cliffs which end in Cape Helles. Thus, the landing parties had to land on a wide expanse of sand, commanded on both sides by hills, and to force their way up this semicircular valley inland.

Deadly Fusillade

Everywhere the Turks had made trenches, protected by barbed wire and held in force, whilst their snipers hidden in the broken ground covered every yard of the foreshore with a deadly fusillade. The place can only be described as a death-trap. At dawn for three-quarters of an hour it was swept by a tremendous fire from the covering ships, which it was hoped would effectively destroy the barbed wire on the foreshore which was known to exist.

Just at daylight the troops were taken inshore from the cruiser *Euryalus* in eight tows. Three of these tows

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made for the cliffs on the right, three others for the beach itself, and the other two kept more in to the left under Cape Teke. All were exposed to a heavy fire while approaching the shore, but the tows which had made for the cliffs to the right reached the beach, and the men immediately scaled the cliffs and obtained a footing on the crest right under the Turkish trenches. Here they were held up, and could advance no farther.

The conduct of our troops throughout the day was splendid, and they literally clung to the edge of the cliff on both sides of the fatal beach, for the tows on the left, which had made for the shelter of Cape Teke, also got ashore, and hung on in the same tenacious manner. But the unfortunate boats which landed on the beach itself found themselves confronted by a solid hedge of uncut barbed wire, and exposed to a terrible cross-fire from pompoms, maxims, trenches, and snipers concealed everywhere. In the cliff you can see holes dug out, in which these maxims were concealed, that rendered them perfectly immune from the shell fire from the ships.

Storming the Cliffs

Every effort was made to cut the wire, but almost all those who landed in the centre were shot down. The beach party, detachments of Engineers, and some of the Royal Naval Division, who were coming ashore in the second tows, made for the shelter of Cape Teke, and, hearing the shouts of our men on the top of the cliffs, they swarmed up, rifles in hand, to their assistance.

This timely aid enabled our troops to advance a little, and they captured a Turkish trench, in which they installed themselves, and thus in a measure checked the enfilade fire on the foreshore. Thus, these parties on either cliff hung on and shot so accurately that the Turks did not dare leave their trenches and charge them, and

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showed no inclination to come to close quarters with such an indomitable foe.

At ten a.m. another regiment was landed, which, sweeping up the valley, cleared the Turks off the skyline. It then became possible to remove the wounded from the beach, to cut the barbed wire, and to start disembarking stores and ammunition.

That afternoon our men even succeeded in advancing a little inland, and some companies worked their way east along the cliffs to try to assist the troops who were endeavouring to get ashore on the beach between Cape Helles and Seddul Bahr. This advance was for a time successful, and some of the enemy's trenches were captured; but the line having become very attenuated, our men had to fall back to the immediate crests commanding W beach. Here they occupied the trenches out of which they had driven the Turks earlier in the day.

Heroic Midshipman

That night the situation again became very serious, for the Turks, having brought up large reinforcements, counter-attacked most determinedly. The beach parties of officers and bluejackets and the detachment of Engineers and of the Naval Division who were disembarking stores on the foreshore, were ordered to pick up their rifles and reinforce the firing line. In the darkness many of the rifles could not be found, but every man who could obtain a weapon went forward to assist the troops, whilst the remainder carried up a continual stream of fresh ammunition from the beach to the firing line in a most gallant manner.

One midshipman, whose name I unfortunately have not got, covered himself with dozens of bandoliers and carried them forward. Before he reached the firing line

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he was hit three times full in the chest by bullets, all of which struck the bandoliers without doing him any harm except to knock him down.

With this reinforcement the thin khaki line held on throughout the night, and the Turks were driven off with heavy loss.

On the following day more troops were landed on W beach, and the whole line, joining up with the troops on X beach, was able to move forward and get astride the peninsula.

Everywhere there is a scene of destruction and desolation, trenches knocked into shapeless heaps by shell fire, abandoned kits, broken rifles, and so forth. It is only by visiting the ground that you can realise what a wonderful feat of arms was accomplished there on that historic Sunday, April 25.

Most Terrible Landing

We now come to the most terrible of all the landings which took place, that on V beach, between Cape Helles and Seddul Bahr. The general configuration of the ground is much the same as that of W beach, which I have already described. There is the same sandy foreshore, with a broken valley running inland to the hills behind, enfiladed by hills on either flank. But these hills are very different to those overlooking W beach, because on them are built the forts of Seddul Bahr, which formerly defended the entrance to the Straits until they were knocked out by our guns.

The work on the left is a solid one, which has stood the bursting of innumerable shells very well. The two great guns mounted there have been knocked out and their emplacements badly shattered, but the bombproofs and ammunition chambers remain intact. Running back from this fort is a perfect network of trenches and

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barbed wire, which go right round the semicircular valley overlooking the beach, and finally join up with the old castle and fort of Seddul Bahr on the farther side.

The Turks had mounted pompoms on the Cape Helles side of the position, and had the usual snipers concealed everywhere. On the right the picturesque old castle of Seddul Bahr fronts the Straits. It is now sadly battered about by our shells, but nevertheless still presents a solid mass of masonry, in which sharpshooters and maxims could lie concealed.

Ruined Seddul Bahr

Just east of the castle are the remains of the great battery which was silenced by our guns on February 19 and 25, and whose 12-in. guns were finally demolished by a landing party of marines and bluejackets. Behind the fort and castle lies the remains of the village of Seddul Bahr, in which there is not a single house left standing, for all have been destroyed by the repeated bombardments of the castle and fort. Nevertheless, the ruins and gardens provide excellent cover for the enemy's sharpshooters from which they could snipe the foreshore.

Behind the remains of the village the ground again rises to a height known as 141, on which the Turks had constructed a perfect maze of trenches and barbed wire, and from which they could dominate the beach at point-blank range. The foreshore and valley leading inland were likewise protected by trenches and wire, and the whole position is, indeed, one of the most formidable which troops have ever attempted to take, even under normal conditions. But when it is remembered that they had to be landed in boats rowed ashore without a particle of cover, the feat becomes almost inexplicable.

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Liner run Ashore

The landing on V beach will ever remain memorable for the novel experiment of running a liner full of troops deliberately ashore, and thus allowing them to approach close in under cover without being exposed as is the case in the open boats. There seems to be a general consensus of opinion that a great many lives were saved by the cover which her steel sides afforded to the hundreds of soldiers crammed between her decks.

Great doors were cut in her sides to allow of a rapid disembarkation, and wooden gangways slung from ropes sloped gradually down from these doors to her bows, so that men could pass down on both sides in single file, and either jump into the water if it was not too deep, or on to the lighters which were towed in with her. Her bridge was made a citadel with steel plates, and twelve maxims, also protected by these improvised casemates, and manned by the maxim section of the Naval Division, were placed in her bows and lower bridge to sweep the shore when the troops disembarked.

Over 2000 men were stowed on board when at dawn, after a rapid bombardment from the battleship *Albion*, the *River Clyde* slowly steamed towards the shore. She was preceded by the usual eight tows of steam pinnaces and boats which were to land the covering party, but it would seem as if the *River Clyde* and the boats reached the shore simultaneously. Those in the boats suffered terribly from a tempest of rifle fire, machine guns, and the four pompoms, which swept the foreshore.

Exciting Scenes

Along the front of the beach is a bank of sand about four or five feet high, and the survivors and wounded crawled behind this, which gave them some cover from the leaden storm.

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Meanwhile the *River Clyde* had gone ashore farther east than had been intended, bow on close to a reef of rock. The rock was too deep to allow of men leaping from her and wading, but this contingency had been foreseen, and a steam hopper was brought up and also run ashore to provide a gangway from the wooden gangways on either side.

But this was not sufficient, and it was necessary to drag a lighter to the far side of the hopper before the troops on board could attempt to disembark. Some gallantly volunteered to get a line ashore and hold the lighter in position. They ran down the gangway under a hail of bullets, leapt on to the hopper, and from there into the sea, and reached the reef of rock which runs out from the shore. Here they held the lighter in position, and called on the soldiers to leave the ship.

During the whole of this time the *River Clyde* was being subjected to a perfect tornado of rifle, maxim, and pompom fire, the bullets rattling against her sides like hailstones. The troops on board knew it meant almost certain destruction to leave her, yet at the call of their officers about 200 dashed down the gangway on the starboard side and attempted to reach the reef. Some were shot on the gangway, others were killed as they reached the hopper, others on the reef, and many of the survivors no sooner reached the beach than they fell. A few only survived, and lay under the shelter of the bank, of which I have already spoken.

It was seen that it would mean annihilation to the whole force if any further attempt to disembark was made, and the attack was accordingly postponed.

Pelted with Bullets

Later in the morning another attempt was tried. On seeing the movement had failed, the battleships *Cornwallis*

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and *Albion*, and also the *Queen Elizabeth* opened a furious bombardment on Seddul Bahr, the hills behind, and on the Turkish trenches, endeavouring to silence the pom-poms. Throughout the entire day the *River Clyde* lay ashore with her 2000 men packed like sardines between her decks, and with officers crowded on her protected bridge. The bullets rattled against her steel plates, but could not penetrate them, whilst the sharpshooters on shore picked off every one who dared show his head above cover. The Turks on the Asiatic shore endeavoured to destroy the *River Clyde* by howitzer fire, but this was kept under by the covering warships in the straits. Nevertheless, she was pierced by four big shells, all of which, fortunately, failed to explode.

It was decided to postpone all further movement until after dark, and then to endeavour to get the troops ashore. In the afternoon some companies of the troops landed on W beach, advanced along the shore, and captured some of the Turkish trenches on the hill overlooking V beach on the left, and also two of the pompoms, but they were forced to retire at night.

The Disembarkation

Thus the position remained unchanged until eight p.m., when it was sufficiently dark to make a fresh attempt to disembark. Strange to say, almost the entire force was got ashore without the Turks firing a shot. On landing, the troops were not pushed straight up the valley in front, but eastwards to get the shelter of the cliffs under the castle of Seddul Bahr.

At eleven o'clock the enemy was alarmed, and again opened up a furious fusillade, sweeping the whole beach, but our men had received instructions to lie down under cover, and suffered but small loss.

Thus, on the night of April 25 a firm hold was obtained

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on the shore, the castle being partly occupied, and the old ruined fort and the cliffs beyond. On Monday morning a further advance through the ruined village was tried. On the left the attack was held up by machine guns placed in some of the towers of the castle, and our men had again to take cover whilst the *Cornwallis* demolished it with her guns.

There was a lot of hard fighting amidst the ruins of the village behind the castle before our troops could clear out the snipers and thus gain the open country beyond, where the wearied attack found itself confronted by the earthworks and barbed wire on Hill 141.

Attack on Trenches

About eleven a.m. commenced a final attack on the Turkish trenches on Hill 141. The losses were severe, but at noon the position was taken and the Turks fled.

Thus at length, after these unparalleled exertions, V beach, like the others, was cleared, and the way paved for a further advance inland.

The ruins of Seddul Bahr present an amazing spectacle. The castle, forts, and village are now little but a jumble of crushed masonry. The guns in the forts lie smashed into huge pieces of steel, and have been thrown by the force of the explosions several yards from their mountings. Great piles of unused ammunition are stacked up beside them. The old towers of the castle are partly standing, although riddled by huge shells. The barracks at the back have been gutted by shells and flames.

In the village beyond it is difficult to follow the line of the streets, as the houses, orchards, and gardens seem to have been thrown into a great pot and all boiled up together. Everywhere the ground is scattered with débris of this terrible fight, fragments of shell, scattered graves, great stains on the stones, knapsacks, greatcoats,

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broken rifles, twisted bayonets, soldiers' caps and helmets, and tattered heaps of uniforms and clothes.

Not a living soul is left in the village, which is deserted except for the stray soldiers sightseeing, and a horde of starving cats prowling around amidst the ruins of their former homes. The interior and roofs of the houses have fallen in and lie mixed up with furniture, bedding, fire-grates, and cooking utensils. It is a scene of awful desolation.

Astride the Peninsula

Beyond the village you can follow the line of the last attack, which ended in the capture of the Turkish trenches on Hill 141, by the graves, the barbed wire, and the amazing maze of trenches, which twist and turn in all directions, many having disappeared altogether under the terrible rain of shell from the ships.

It only remains to mention what happened on S beach, which lies between Seddul Bahr and De Totts battery. Here some 700 men were put ashore from trawlers and succeeded in establishing themselves on the cliffs, and held their position in the face of a stiff opposition until this wing was taken over by the French. A company was also landed at Camber, the little boat harbour nestling just east and under the ruined fort of Seddul Bahr, but it could make no progress up the steep cliffs into the village in face of the enemy's fire, and had to be withdrawn.

It has cost us dearly to get astride the Gallipoli peninsula, but there is no finer tale in our history than that of the deeds which were performed on Sunday, April 25, by Australian, New Zealand, and British troops, supported with equal gallantry by the officers and men of the warships. Neither must we forget the rôle played by the French, who, landing on the Asiatic shore, occupied Kum

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Kale and captured 500 Turkish prisoners, but were then withdrawn according to the pre-arranged plan.

Many are the stories of the individual gallantry of officers and men which will probably remain for ever untold, and many a hero who deserves the Victoria Cross now lies beneath the soil.

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CHAPTER IX

THE FIRST STAGE—IMPREGNABLE POSITION

May 10

THE first stage of the great battle for the possession of the heights of Aki Baba has come to a close, and although the British army is not yet in possession of this commanding position, the enemy has been forced to disclose his strength and the character of his defences, and we are now in a position to estimate the full measure of the task which lies ahead.

Aki Baba is the first of the commanding positions on which the Turco-German force can take its stand before we are able to move up the Gallipoli peninsula and thus command the northern shore of the Narrows. There are others just as formidable, even if not more so, behind it, and unless the enemy suddenly loses heart and decides to give in, a contingency on which we have no right to speculate, all these positions must be taken, hill by hill, valley by valley, and trench by trench, before the army can open the gate to the Fleet and enable it to pass through to Constantinople. Once our Fleet is past the Narrows the end has come.

Those who in their ignorance of the true state of affairs on the Gallipoli peninsula expected a speedy and triumphant success will be disappointed, but those who have studied the lessons of modern warfare in France and Poland will at once realise that the Anglo-French armies have not only accomplished marvels considering their strength, but also that the soldiers of both nations

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in two weeks of continuous fighting have performed deeds which have never been surpassed in the history of either nation.

A Tenacious Enemy

It is only just that all false illusions as to the task before us should be cleared away, once and for all. Victories leading to decisive results can no more be gained in a day on the Gallipoli peninsula than they can be in France or Belgium.

We are fighting a brave and tenacious enemy, who is most skilfully led, and who has always proved himself a most formidable foe when driven into a corner and placed on the defensive.

The men our troops are fighting to-day are of the same stamp as those who held Plevna under Osman. They are fighting for their existence as a factor in European politics; for the retention of the city which is the pride and delight of every Turk.

They are not going to give in and let us through to the Narrows, so we have got to fight our way yard by yard, and the war here has become, as it has been so long in France, a question of how many men you can afford to the capture of each trench and each kilometre of soil. Victory can only be gained here, as in France, by more men and a continuous supply of ammunition.

Our gallant troops and those of our Allies have made enormous sacrifices to prepare the way for the reinforcements from home to follow up the successes which this band of heroes, so many of whom lie beneath the soil, have achieved. Our positions are impregnable, and no force the Turks can bring against us will move our men from the lines which they have won by sheer hard fighting.

But apparently the Turk, who in modern times has never loved offensive tactics, has grasped this fact, and

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now hopes that we will hurl ourselves against his entrenchments and redoubts.

Blow to Turco-Germans

That both the Turks and Germans have received a staggering blow we know, for they were convinced that the Gallipoli peninsula was impregnable, that no enemy could possibly land on any of the beaches, and that if by chance an isolated force should get ashore they could drive it into the sea at the point of the bayonet. Indeed, the enemy had every right to suppose that his defences would prove impregnable to all attacks.

The more you examine the positions the more apparent is the extraordinary feat of arms performed by the 29th Division, the Naval Divisions, and the landing parties from the ships on that never-to-be-forgotten morning of April 25. Each beach was a fortress in itself, not only protected against attack from the sea, but also offering an equal measure of protection against attack from the land, a precaution which it was confidently anticipated would have removed the last chance of a hostile force retaining a footing on the shore, even supposing it did succeed in effecting a landing at any one point.

But all these obstacles were overcome by our men, who proved themselves just the same determined fighters who astonished the French, and even Wellington himself, a hundred years ago at Badajoz and Ciudad Rodrigo. The superlative merit of the achievement, however, lies in the fact that the same men who went through this dreadful ordeal of the 25th maintained their position without receiving any reinforcement for several days in the face of most determined counter-attacks, and actually advanced their lines until they were firmly established astride of the peninsula, facing the heights of Aki Baba. The Turks fought with extreme bravery, and made the

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most determined efforts to drive us into the sea, not only on the night of the landing, but also in a sustained effort on the night of Wednesday, April 28.

Great Turkish Losses

They pressed forward on our thinly held lines in close-order formations after the manner of the Germans, hoping by sheer weight of numbers to smash their way through the enfeebled khaki line, but they were everywhere repulsed, and long rows of their dead lying in perfect military formation in front of our trenches indicate the high-water mark of their futile efforts.

Since that night their efforts against our line have only been spasmodic, and their main efforts have been directed against the French, who, after their landing at Kum Kale, were taken from the Asiatic shore and placed on the right of our line. On the night of the 28th they attacked them in dense masses which melted away under the rapid fire of the Lebels, and were finally routed in a fierce and well-directed counter-attack at the point of the bayonet.

On the following Saturday (May 1), the Turks again pressed forward against this part of the line, which was the scene of desperate fighting. At one time a portion of the French trenches actually passed into their hands, but the situation was saved and the ground held.

We know from prisoners that the enemy was largely reinforced from Adrianople and from Asia Minor, and all are unanimous in saying that the Turkish losses were enormous in these futile efforts to carry out General Liman von Sanders' orders to drive us into the sea at the point of the bayonet. But it was not the policy of the Allied commanders to sit still and allow their lines to be attacked. They were quite content to see the enemy break himself in waves of dead and wounded

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against our entrenched positions while they were preparing for the great counterstroke, the first stage of which has just been ended.

Navy and Army Co-operate

But before I deal with these events I will just touch on the immense work which has been accomplished by the Navy during the last two weeks. The whole of the responsibility for landing the troops and keeping up the supplies of food and ammunition is in their hands, and in addition, the responsibility of protecting the flanks of the combined armies, and in keeping down the enemy's artillery fire, lies with the warships. All the troops, animals, guns, wagons, stores, ammunition, and a thousand other things, have to be taken from the hundred transports lying off the Straits, which arrive full and leave empty for a fresh cargo at all hours of the day and night, and conveyed in trawlers or lighters to two narrow beaches, neither of which is more than two hundred yards in width. The cliffs prohibit landing anything at any other point.

Our naval commanders, lieutenants and midshipmen in charge of this work have developed an efficiency which has astounded even the most tape-ridden theorists on how such matters should be carried through smoothly and with a minimum of delay. Piers have been built out into deep water by our sappers, so that the largest lighters can come alongside. Roads have been cut along the cliffs to increase the area of disembarkation, and a hundred devices have been hit upon to lessen labour and increase efficiency, including systems of lighting which enable the work to go on uninterruptedly night and day. For it never stops, and even when the day's work is over and the last lighter has discharged her

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cargo, the streams of wounded are walking or being carried down to the beaches, where they are embarked on the empty barges and dispatched, for transportation to Egypt, to the hospital ships and transports. They keep watches on shore just as they do at sea, and their devotion to duty and keenness is just as marked as when facing the enemy's batteries in the Dardanelles.

"Our Young Kitcheners"

The line of demarkation between the authority of the Army and the Navy is strictly drawn. As long as a soldier, a horse, a gun, or a biscuit is on a ship or on a lighter on its way to the shore all are under the control of our beach parties. You see standing on one of the piers in the sweltering heat of the last few days, with the beach behind him crammed with men, stores and animals, one of our young Kitcheners with a megaphone in his hand, shouting orders to a dozen different lighters, each towed by a steam pinnace, in the offing. One contains mules, another guns, a third biscuits, a fourth tinned meat, a fifth ammunition, a sixth troops, a seventh generals and staff officers.

Every one is directed to its right destination as if by some enchanter's wand, and no one dare step ashore until he has received his orders.

At the end of the pier the naval authority ceases and that of the Army begins. Here are Army Service Corps officers, whose efficiency has become a commonplace throughout all the hungry soldiers of our Allies or enemies, waiting to seize what the Navy has given them, and the thousand miscellaneous articles which look as if they never could be sorted out are speedily divided, checked, and sent on their way down the lines of communication to the troops in the front trenches.

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Marvel of Organisation

The whole is a marvel of organisation; how it is managed will ever remain a mystery to me; but certainly such a task has never been attempted by an army and navy before.

Neither let it be supposed that the work is carried out in peace and quiet: far from it. The Turks on the Asiatic shore shell the beach almost every day, and our warships are continually engaged in trying to locate their guns and knock them out or force them to change their positions. There is one gun known as the "Jewel of Asia," which continually drops shells, but with a minimum of result. You hear the shriek of its arrival, and then the explosion, followed by a cloud of sand, out of which emerge figures of men and animals who should have been killed or injured, but who very seldom are.

On this beach the sight of the "Ship of Troy" or *River Clyde* seems to excite the enemy's peculiar indignation, and they fire round after round at her whilst the work of disembarkation goes on uninterruptedly. Sometimes the enemy's aircraft sweep down and attempt to drop their bombs on our ships or crowded beaches, but these missiles from the sky only excite derision. The most successful shot from the Asiatic coast blew up a gun caisson, killing seven horses and one man.

At night this southern end of Gallipoli, which was formerly so deserted and barren, has the appearance of being one of the world's greatest ports. The masses of lights ashore look as if several towns had suddenly sprung up, whilst at sea a hundred great transports and numerous warships lie packed outside the forbidding and still defiant Straits.

These are some of the difficulties which have been faced and overcome before the Army could assume its offensive.

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CHAPTER X

FURIOUS ATTACKS ON AKI BABA MOUNTAIN

May 10

On May 6 reinforcements reached our army and also the French, and, sufficient stores and ammunition having been got ashore, the Allied commanders were able to resume the offensive against the enemy's positions, which had been suspended, save for some local advances, since Wednesday, April 28.

Now commenced one of the most remarkable battles which have ever been fought, and every detail of which, owing to the peculiar nature of the country, could be followed almost with the naked eye, and with the utmost ease through glasses.

It has been a battle of quite the old-fashioned type, only on a larger plane, where the commanders could direct the movements of their troops through the telephone and field telegraph, not only on reports received from their brigadiers at the front, but chiefly from what they could watch going on under their own eyes.

The eventual objective of this great offensive was to obtain possession of the height of Aki Baba, but before this could be attempted it was necessary to obtain possession of the two great arms of that sombre mountain which stretch out, the one to the Gulf of Saros and the other to the shores of the Dardanelles.

From a hill above the beach a perfect view is obtained of the entire battlefield, and it is from this standpoint that I shall attempt to describe the memorable scenes

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which have occurred during the past few days, culminating as they did in the tremendous combined infantry assault on the enemy's whole line on the evening of May 8.

A Forbidding Mountain

From this hill the top of Aki Baba is exactly six miles to the north-east, and the stretch which it covers with its two wings from the Gulf of Saros to the Dardanelles is almost the same distance. In fact, you may say that the Allied Armies were fighting for the side of a rhomboid culminating in the peak of Aki Baba, the rest of which was already in their possession and covered by the fire of the warships.

The mountain itself has a peculiarly forbidding aspect. It most nearly resembles an old Chinese idol, with a great, round, stupid-looking head and two short, thick-set shoulders, and then two long arms stretching out on either side to the sea.

Between these two arms lies the plain, very broken in parts into low plateaux and deep dongas, and the old Chinese idol sitting directly in front of you looks exactly as if he had been placed there to devour in his fiendish grasp all the soldiers, guns and material discharged from the ships in the offing. This he has not succeeded in doing, and a large portion of both his lower arms have been cut off in this three days' battle.

The right arm of the mountain ends at the head of the great donga which, running inland from the beach on the Gulf of Saros, has been a source of endless trouble to our troops ever since we first landed. It is rugged and rocky, and covered with dense scrub, and in it and above it the enemy's snipers lie concealed, and have to be driven, or rather hunted, out man by man. But the donga was finally occupied on April 28, after fierce fighting, and our trenches now lie across the top of it.

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Endless Trenches

From the top of this donga the long, broken slope leads up to the village of Krithia. The ground is covered with this awful scrub and broken into patches of heath and Scotch firs. There are ravines, low hills, and dead ground which everywhere afford every sort of concealment to an enemy. The Turks have dug endless trenches, which are only located with extreme difficulty, while their machine guns are concealed with that masterful skill which is such a prominent feature of German warfare. As you approach Krithia the last mile is more open and partly cultivated, but here again there is any amount of dead ground in which an enemy can lie concealed.

Krithia is a fairly large village, made up of scattered white houses with red roofs and a fringe of trees, while outside the trees are numerous round stone mills, the most prominent features of the landscape, and which take an awful lot of hammering from the ships' guns. From Krithia the ground rises more steeply to the right-hand shoulder of Aki Baba itself.

The left arm of Aki Baba stretches to the Dardanelles ending at De Totts Battery. On the far side is the river or stream of Kereves Dere. This arm is less broken than that stretching to the Gulf of Saros, and the ground is not covered with the same dense scrub; in fact, there is not so much dead ground.

In the morning the plain which is embraced by the arms of Aki Baba is a beautiful and fertile garden. You gaze down upon a landscape of dark green, light green, and bright yellow. It abounds in green fields covered with a coarse grass and is dotted with trees. There are, besides, many scattered farms.

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A Wonderful Garden

In a short ride across it you will find yourself amid olives, Turkey oats, witch elms, apricots, almonds, Scottish firs and small tamarisks. On the cliffs are great bunches of yellow plantagenesta and yellow poppies. You ride over fields and through gardens in which flowers abound in a reckless and beautiful profusion. There are white orchids and rock roses, while mauve stock and iris abound. There are fields of poppies, white marguerites, and blue borage, intermingled with deep purple vetches, brick-red pea and yellow clover, pink and white campions, and asphodel.

As you ride through this wonderful garden, which seems designed by nature for the especial benefit of those who love peace and retirement, you forget altogether that you are on a field which will shortly be the scene of a bloody battle, and you are only brought to a realisation of your true position by having your horse stop dead before barbed wire or by the sight of deserted trenches, the scenes of the earlier fighting, or by the whistle of a bullet or the shriek of a shrapnel overhead warning you that it is time to turn back or dismount. The whole of this plain is littered with the débris of war, broken rifles, barbed wire, deserted trenches, tattered uniforms, hastily dug graves, and abandoned equipment.

On this memorable morning of May 6 there stood drawn up in front of the Huns and Ottoman Turks the Army of the Last Crusade. The main road to Krithia runs through the centre of the position and roughly divides the ground into two portions, that on the left, facing the right arm of Aki Baba, being held by the English, and that on the right by the French, but some of our troops were over the road supporting the French left wing. Thus, the British left rested on the Gulf of Saros and the French right on the Dardanelles.

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Battle of Nations

I suppose this three days' struggle will go down to history as the Battle of Aki Baba, but it might well be called the Battle of the Nations. I doubt whether so many different nationalities have ever before been brought together on to one battlefield. Side by side in the Anglo-French Army there fought English, Scottish and Irish Regiments, Australians and New Zealanders, Sikhs, Punjabis and Gurkhas, whilst our Navy was represented by the Naval Volunteer Division and Marines.

On the other side of the Krithia road, in the French ranks, were drawn up Frenchmen, Algerians, Zouaves, Goumiers, Senegalese, and the heterogeneous elements which form the Foreign Legion. Neither was the picturesque element of colour absent from the scene, as in most modern battles, for amidst the green and yellow of the fields and gardens the dark blue uniforms of the Senegalese, the red trousers of the Zouaves, and the new light blue uniforms of the French infantry, showed up in pleasant contrast amidst the dull-hued masses of the British brigades.

On either flank, out in the Dardanelles and along the Gulf of Saros, lying close in to the shore, lay our battleships and cruisers, with their guns trained to sweep every yard of the enemy's position, and further off lay the forest of masts and funnels of the immense fleet of transports which had disgorged this mixed host between the forbidding sombre arms of Aki Baba.

All the trenches occupied by our troops in the firing line, the long lines of the supports, and the closer formation of the reserves were visible to spectators, and you could follow every movement made on this strange chessboard of war.

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Formation of the Line

But what of the enemy? What was this great army drawn from so many climes and so many nations facing? That was the mystery we were about to solve. Not a Turk, nor a Hun, nor a gun, or hardly even a trench was visible. Aki Baba and his two long arms might have been deserted for all we knew on this beautiful spring morning.

Nothing has been more remarkable than the manner in which the Turks have succeeded in concealing themselves. They are experts in digging themselves in and never disclosing their position by any movement above ground. The Anglo-French army was in front of a position, to outward observation and nothing more, and a stranger arriving on the scene might naturally have thought it was merely a great parade set out at his feet, to be followed by a forward march to occupy the hills in front. A deadly stillness pervaded the air, broken occasionally by a little cloud of white smoke from a shrapnel bursting over a far trench.

Our army was drawn up in the following order on this the first day of the battle. On the extreme left the 87th Brigade held the great donga and the trenches on the hills. Beyond, the line was prolonged to the right by the 88th Brigade and then on to the Krithia road by part of the Naval Division. On the other side of the road was another brigade of the same division.

Behind the line the Indian Brigade, the Australians, and New Zealanders stood in reserve, and behind them the newly arrived Territorial division.

On the right the French stood with the blue-coated Senegalese in their front line, and the light blue French infantry, the Red Zouaves, and the Foreign Legion in reserve.

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The immediate objective of the English was to push forward our left wing and, at the same time, to endeavour to occupy Krithia and the ridge on which it stands. The immediate objective of the French was to advance up the spurs and get astride the Maidos road, and at the same time to advance into the valley of the Kereves river.

It was decided that our left wing could not advance until the French had made good their footing on the right, otherwise our advance could be enfiladed. Therefore the first day's fighting was almost entirely confined to the right wing.

Exactly at eleven the French 75's round Seddul Bahr began a fierce and sustained bombardment of the right arm of Aki Baba and the broken country under its summit to the right of the Krithia road. The shells, fired in salvoes, four at a time, swept every yard of the ground over which their infantry were waiting to advance, and this rapid fire was kept up incessantly for half an hour. At the same time our battleships in the Dardanelles, which included the *Agamemnon*, turned their big guns to the upper slopes of Aki Baba and the Turkish trenches in the Kereves valley.

At 11.30 the blue-coated Senegalese crept from their trenches and swept forward in open order up the right arm of the mountain. For some time they made steady progress, their artillery covering the advance beautifully, bursting shrapnel fifty yards ahead of the firing line with that precision peculiar to the French gunner. When the infantry topped the slope overlooking the valley they found themselves most strenuously resisted by the Turks from their entrenchments on the other side of the crest, and the advance was held up.

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Attack held Up

Part of the firing line wheeled to the left, and moved forward up the arm towards the Maidos road, whilst our Naval Division, supporting the French left, also advanced across the low, broken ground under a heavy fire which caused many casualties. The advance towards the Maidos road was partly successful, but was eventually held up by a redoubt and carefully concealed trenches. In vain did the ships' guns and the 75's pour shrapnel and common shell on to the position. Nothing checked the fire of the Turkish infantry.

Time and time again long waves of dark blue-coated Senegalese swept forward, only to break before the storm of bullets. Then they were withdrawn to the second line and the light blue regiments took their place. The fighting ebbed and flowed all day, but the Turkish infantry could not be shaken by our terrific shell fire, or rather, our guns could inflict but little damage on their well-made trenches, which were found to be eight feet deep and extremely narrow.

At 4.30 it was finally reported that the advance was held up, and as it was not considered advisable for our left wing to push forward until the French had made good their footing, the fighting gradually died down at half-past five.

Although the French had not succeeded in getting astride of the Maidos road, they had made substantial progress, having pushed forward their line almost due east for over a mile, and had obtained a foothold overlooking the Kereves valley. The Turks scarcely fired a round from their guns all day, and this gave rise to the belief that they had withdrawn them or were short of ammunition.

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A Forward Move

That night, between ten and two in the morning, the Turks delivered a series of counter-attacks against the French lines, which were repulsed.

On Friday, May 7, at ten a.m., our ships opened up a furious bombardment of the right arm of Aki Baba, sweeping the broken country at the head of the great donga and the slopes leading up to Krithia. The shells smothered every yard of the ground and it seemed impossible for any one to live within this zone, as the scrub and ravines were yellow with bursting lyddite. After a quarter of an hour of this rapid fire from the ships and batteries on the shore there was a general advance of our left wing.

The 87th and 88th Brigades pressed forward through the scrub at the top of the donga and in the centre towards the Krithia road. No sooner did they leave the shelter of their trenches than the Turkish infantry, who had been lying absolutely quiet, opened up a tremendous fire from concealed trenches, the existence of which had been suspected but whose true position it had been impossible to locate, and it was obvious that his morale had suffered but little from the fire of the Fleet's guns.

Nevertheless, our infantry, advancing in perfect order, with lines of reserves and supports occupying the vacated trenches as they moved forward, gained considerable ground and captured some of the enemy's trenches, only to find themselves held up by others.

Throughout the morning the enemy used his field guns actively against our left wing, generally concentrating his fire on the reserves and supports. At 1.45 one of our regiments, which had got too far forward and had occupied a dense patch of scrub and Scottish firs,

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was obliged to retire under a tremendous hail of bullets from machine guns.

The fighting along this part of the line went on all the morning, but finally died down towards two o'clock.

Hail of Shrapnel

Meanwhile, on the right wing, the French had been very quiet all the morning, but at noon their artillery again opened up a furious bombardment, and at three o'clock there was a general advance up the slope towards the Maidos road, whilst the Naval Division on their left also pushed forward. This movement gained considerable ground.

At 4.45 the Turks brought a great many guns into action against the French, plastering their advance trenches with shrapnel, and sweeping the ground behind them to prevent supports being brought up.

The French batteries replied furiously, shelling the Turkish trenches and the redoubt, which was the chief obstacle in the way of a further advance. Nevertheless, their infantry again swept forward and were met by such a hail of shrapnel that the line wavered, then broke, and came sweeping down the slope, part of the fugitives passing right throught the lines of the Naval Division.

Indeed, the fire which the Turks were now developing was unbearable, and it was impossible to locate their batteries, concealed somewhere on the other side of Aki Baba. The situation looked serious and as if all the ground which had been won would be abandoned, but General D'Amade sent forward his reserves, who gallantly delivered a counter-attack and reoccupied the abandoned trenches. Night came with the French still holding tenaciously on under a heavy fire from the enemy's guns.

Meanwhile, throughout the afternoon, there had been no further fighting on our left wing, and between two and

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four the firing died down to an occasional exchange of rifle shots, whilst our men were busy making good the positions they had won earlier in the day. At 3.15 a brigade was moved from the centre to support our left wing. It had been lying concealed all day in the broken ground, and the companies, marching by platoons in artillery formation, swept along the coast towards the great donga, providing a very fine spectacle.

Waves of Khaki

At five o'clock another furious artillery fire was concentrated from all our guns on the right arm of Aki Baba and on the village of Krithia, and a quarter of an hour later our infantry again pressed forward on the left centre. Once again the rifle and machine gun fire became fast and furious, but our men made steady progress, capturing further patches of the scrub and occupying more of the ravines.

At 6.10 p.m., on the extreme left by the sea coast, long lines of khaki figures suddenly seemed to emerge from the head of the great donga and to press forward, making a sweeping movement towards Hill 400, behind Krithia. They were met by a tremendous shrapnel fire from the Turkish guns, just as the French had been on the right. The shells burst right over our men, and whole companies disappeared from view in the dense clouds of earth and sand thrown up by the bullets.

But these great khaki waves never hesitated. One after another they pressed forward, losing heavily, but, fortunately, the enemy's aim being high, most of the wounds were slight. This advance on the left gained much ground and was finally brought to a stop by the darkness. Fighting had been furious all day. All reports from the front showed the extreme difficulty of locating and attacking the enemy's positions. His

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trenches and machine guns, concealed in the dense scrub and in the ravines, proved impervious to the fire of even the biggest guns, and every one of them had to be taken one by one by our infantry, who had fought with extreme determination and bravery.

It was obvious that the enemy's morale could not be shaken by artillery fire, however severe. But on the whole we had gained considerable ground, and on the right were now within about 800 yards of Krithia village, with our men strongly entrenched and in a position to resist any attempt at a night attack.

Determined Enemy

The Turks had fought with extreme bravery and determination, whilst the handling of their artillery had been masterly. They only employed it in any volume when the absolute necessity arose—namely, to check the further advance of the French on our right wing and our own great sweeping movement on the left. Either they were husbanding their ammunition or were afraid to disclose the position of their artillery, through fear of the ships' guns.

On the morning of May 8, at ten o'clock, this battle, which had now lasted for two days without cessation, was continued with even greater violence, for our troops, although weary from their great exertions, were determined to obtain a decisive success if it were possible. The ships opened up another tremendous bombardment of the right arm of Aki Baba off Krithia village and the ground behind.

When this had lasted for half an hour our infantry on the left and left centre again advanced to the attack, and again commenced one of those furious outbursts of rifle and machine gun fire which showed the Turks were still holding their trenches with their old determination.

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Nevertheless the 87th and 88th Brigades were not to be denied, and continued to gained ground. In fact, on the left, an entire Turkish trench was taken, and our khaki lines disappeared altogether from view in the thick shrub. Throughout the morning the fight became a series of local combats of intense ferocity for odd ravines, trenches and hills. Sometimes we were driven back, but gradually the whole fighting line was pushed forward in front of Krithia, at a distance which rendered a final assault on the village possible.

Perfect British Attack

Throughout this fierce fighting in the broken ground on the slopes leading up to Krithia, the plain at our feet looked as if some annual manœuvres were taking place on it. Across the whole front successive lines of khaki figures were pressing forward across the green fields and through the farms and orchards towards the firing line. The enemy's shrapnel burst over them, but inflicted small damage, owing to the open formations adopted, and when each successive line reached the fire zone it doubled across the open ground, resting in the different vacated trenches and then passing on to the next.

The whole of the plain seemed alive with this khaki-clad infantry. It was, indeed, a perfect example of the classical British attack, carried out over a broad front so as to concentrate the maximum number of men in the firing line for the final assault on the enemy's position with a minimum of loss. Had the Germans advanced over the same ground in their close order formations they would have been swept away by the rifles, machine guns and shrapnel before ever reaching their objective—namely, the most forward shelter trenches.

These reserve troops, who were now moving forward to the firing line, were the New Zealand brigade, which

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moved up to pass through the 88th Brigade for the final assault, and on their left the Australian brigade, who passed through the Naval Brigade on the left of the Krithia road for a like purpose. The 87th Brigade still held the ground at the top of the great donga, while the Indian Brigade and Lancashire Fusilier Brigade acted as a general reserve.

Aeroplane Appears

At 1.30 p.m. these final movements were completed, and there came a complete lull all over the battlefield, the only incident being the appearance of one of the enemy's aeroplanes, which attempted to drop some bombs on the beaches and ships, without, however, doing any damage. On the right, held by the French, there had been no movement throughout the morning, and even the artillery had hardly fired. The afternoon passed very slowly. It was obvious that something was going to happen, but no one except the Staff knew when the next move would come or what form it would take.

There were various reasons for this delay. In the course of the advance in the morning the line had become very broken up, and it had to be straightened out and the position of the various units accurately ascertained, as it was hard to tell whether certain trenches and positions were in our hands or were still held by the enemy. All this information had to come from the front, and was then distributed to the batteries and ships, so that they could ascertain the ranges accurately and not run the risk of shelling our own men.

As the afternoon wore on there were many who thought that the fighting was over for the day, and some of the spectators who had come ashore or who had climbed up from the beaches to look on returned.

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Exactly at 5.15 p.m. there suddenly opened from every ship afloat and from every battery ashore the most stupendous bombardment it has ever been my lot to see. In fact, those officers who had previously served in France declared they had never seen anything like it there.

Smoke-wreathed Hills

All the battleships and all the cruisers with their heavy guns and secondary armament opened a rapid fire on both arms of Aki Baba, on Krithia, and on every patch of shrub and every ravine which could possibly conceal a Turk or a Hun. The 15-inch shells charged with lyddite made the most awful explosions, apparently consuming whole hills in immense clouds of yellow smoke and fumes. The 12-inch shells of the other battleships, either charged with lyddite or shrapnel, searched every yard of the slopes leading up to Aki Baba, whilst the 6-inch and smaller guns sprayed the country nearer our trenches.

There were, in fact, three separate zones of fire, the great guns on Aki Baba and its higher slopes, the secondary armament lower down, and then, just in front of our trenches, the field guns and field howitzers poured a continuous shower of shrapnel over the ground over which our infantry had to advance.

The noise was something frightful, the hills echoing back the reports of the great guns and the detonations of the thousands of bursting projectiles. As a spectacle the scene has never been surpassed, for from the extreme left at the head of the great donga to the extreme right of the French line, the whole country did not have the appearance of being shelled, but rather as if it had suddenly been set on fire, covered as it was in a few minutes by a solid bank of yellow, green, and white smoke, out

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of which great volcanoes seem suddenly to burst into irruption as the shells exploded on the higher ridges.

In the midst of this inferno you occasionally caught a glimpse of the solid round head and thick-set shoulders of Aki Baba, still gazing defiantly on the plain beneath. The tremendous disturbance to earth and atmosphere caused by this unprecedented bombardment caused all work to be suspended on the beaches, and soldiers and sailors, seized by a common desire to witness the grand finale of this three days' battle, rushed up to the higher ground, from which a view could be obtained.

Bayonet Charge

The bombardment had lasted exactly a quarter of an hour. Every one knew that something decisive must happen soon, and the suspense was great. According to all preconceived theories of artillery fire the enemy should have been wiped out, or so stunned by the exploding lyddite that he would not be capable of resisting the advance of our infantry. Not a Turk was to be seen, and their artillery had not fired a round, or else we had failed to notice it amidst the terrific uproar.

Suddenly, as if controlled by a single will, the guns ceased to fire for a few seconds. This was the signal for the infantry, who had hardly been visible, so carefully were they lying concealed amidst the scrub and in the trenches. As one man the entire line, from the head of the great donga to the Krithia road, leaped forward and rushed to the assault of Krithia. At the same instant light and dark blue columns were seen to burst from the French trenches. They also had lain quiet all day, and they rushed forward up the slopes towards the Maidos road.

Line after line of khaki figures emerged from cover and dashed forward, with the sun glittering on their

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bayonets, and no sooner were they clear of the trenches than the bombardment was resumed, the ships' guns again shelling the higher ground, and our own artillery keeping up a white surf of shrapnel only fifty yards ahead of the firing line.

Shooting and Stabbing

In spite, however, of all this preliminary preparation, the enemy was waiting ready. No sooner had our men emerged from cover than a perfect storm of rifle and machine gun fire was opened up on them from the trenches and shrub over which the shells had burst and were still bursting. The rifle fire rose fast into one continuous roar, only broken by the more rapid note of the machine guns. But our men never hesitated for a moment. The New Zealanders hurled themselves forward in a solid phalanx, passing through the 88th Brigade, and many of the gallant men of those regiments, refusing to yield any right of way to them, joined their ranks and rushed forward in a thin, mad charge.

The line entered one Turkish trench with a rush, bayoneted all there, and then passed on into broken ground, shooting and stabbing, men falling amidst the terrible fusillade, but not a soul turning back. No sooner had one line charged than another pressed on after it, and then a third.

On the right of the New Zealanders the Australians advanced at the same moment, but over much more open ground, which provided little or no cover. They were met by a tornado of bullets, and were enfiladed by machine guns from the right, and the artillery in vain endeavoured to keep down this fire.

The manner in which these Dominion troops went forward will never be forgotten by those who witnessed it. The lines of infantry were enveloped in dust from

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the patter of countless bullets in the sandy soil, and from the hail of shrapnel poured on them, for now the enemy's artillery concentrated furiously on the whole line.

The lines advanced steadily as if on parade, sometimes doubling, sometimes walking, and you saw them melt away under this dreadful fusillade, only to be renewed again as the reserves and supports moved forward to replace those who had fallen.

In spite of all obstacles, a considerable advance towards Krithia was made, but at length a point was reached from which it was impossible to proceed further. Not a man attempted to return to the trenches. They simply lay down where they were and attempted to reply to their concealed enemy, not one of whom disclosed his position. Only a few hundred yards had been won, it is true, but these Australians and New Zealanders were determined not to budge, and proceeded to entrench themselves where they were. But it became obvious at the end of an hour that the attack had spent its force, and that the hope of taking Krithia by direct assault must be abandoned.

On the right much the same scenes were being enacted on the ground over which the French were advancing. Whenever I could tear my eyes away from the khaki lines moving forward, thinned but still steadfast, I watched the French. A confused memory remains of solid lines of Senegalese and light blue infantry charging forward, then recoiling, breaking, and retiring a little under a hail of shrapnel, only to renew the attack a few minutes later.

There seemed to be a succession of desperate bayonet charges taking place all over the slopes of Aki Baba's left arm, and the French at one time made a most pronounced advance, covered by their 75's, which kept up an unceasing fire on the Turkish trenches. The attack

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looked as if it would lead to great results, especially when a light blue infantry regiment stormed one of the Turkish trenches at the point of the bayonet. It was one of the most dramatic moments of the whole scene, for the Turks could not retreat to the valley beyond, being cut off by the fire of the 75's.

Temporary Check

The French lines of glittering bayonets were now within fifty yards of them, when the survivors came boldly out, stood on the top of their trenches, and fired into the advancing line. The French hesitated for a moment, as if expecting a surrender, and then rushed forward, and both lines clashed on the top, finally disappearing from view over the crest amidst a cloud of dust and shrapnel. I do not think any of the Turks got away.

No sooner had this position been won, however, than the French were driven back again by the fire of another trench and the rapid salvoes of shrapnel, the Turks or Germans handling their guns with great skill. But this check was only temporary, and a counter-attack by a large number of Senegalese retrieved the position.

Confused fighting went on all along the line, until at 7.30 p.m. the gradual approach of darkness put an end to this terrible combat. Everywhere the Allies had gained some ground, but the main object of the attack had not yet been achieved. Aki Baba still looks defiantly on the plain beneath, and it is obvious that positions such as those held by a foe as indomitable as the Turks can only be won by extreme patience. Our men have done everything mortal man can do.

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CHAPTER XI

DESPERATE ATTACK ON COLONIAL TROOPS

May 21

GENERAL LIMAN VON SANDERS has just made a further effort to carry out his threat to drive the British Army into the sea, with the sole result that his unfortunate dupes, the Turks, have received another "hiding" from the Australians and New Zealanders. Their losses have been enormous, amounting at the very least to seven or eight thousand killed and wounded.

The cost of this most encouraging success has been trifling, amounting to some 500 Colonials killed and wounded, whilst the moral effect on our splendid comrades, who were becoming rather bored with sitting tight day after day in the narrow trenches, must be equivalent to the addition of nearly an entire army corps to their ranks.

I have already described the position in previous dispatches. This is indeed one of the most remarkable positions ever seized and occupied by an army on a hostile coast, and the more you see of it the more extraordinary does it seem that the Colonials were ever able to climb it and afterwards hold it on that historic Sunday, April 25. It is certainly the most remarkable climb in the history of war since Wolfe stormed the heights of Quebec.

The ground occupied by the Colonial Corps consists roughly of two semicircles of hills, the outer higher than the inner, and rising in places to over 600 feet. A great

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valley, known as Shrapnel Valley, runs north-east up the centre of the position, roughly dividing the position into a northern and southern sector, both of which are rough and broken ground, consisting of lesser hills and deep gullies covered with thick shrub or bare yellow earth of the colour of sandstone.

Topical Names

Every camp, hill and gully now has a distinctive Australian or Colonial name. The position facing north is known as Walker's Ridge, and following the perimeter of defence right round until it again strikes the coast to the south you are introduced in turn to Pope's Hill, Dead Man's Ridge, the Bloody Angle, Quinn's Post, Courtenay's Post, McLaurin Hill, Scott's Point, Johnstone's Jolly, Bolton's Hill, and Point Rosenthal, each of these names recalling some incident of the campaign or some memory of peaceful times in " Down Under."

Within this position are many other topical designations, such as Plugger's Plateau, Maclagan's Ridge, Queensland Point, Hell Spit—where the landing was very bad—Brighton Beach, Shell Green, Sapper's Post, MacCoy Hill, the Razor Back, Monash Gully, to mention just a few.

The enemy is entrenched almost right round the position, except where the ships' guns keep him off the coast. Generally speaking, to the north and north-east his trenches are on higher ground, while to the south and south-east they lie lower than ours. The distance between the two front lines varies from about a quarter of a mile to twenty yards at one point, and the average is about 200 yards.

Between Walker's Ridge and Pope's Hill the enemy is strongly entrenched. He can look right down the valley and snipe all those going up it at long range, while his

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guns never weary of pouring an incessant hail of shrapnel. But if the actual area of ground held by the Australians and New Zealanders remains the same, the general aspect has changed, and instead of resembling the temporary home of a vast number of shipwrecked mariners the cliffs have the appearance of being a prosperous mining camp in full swing. Good roads have been made from the foreshore up to the front lines, and in those places where you are exposed to shrapnel or sniping they have been banked to give some protection. For, although the Turks have made no attack, until the one I shall attempt to describe, for some time, they have never ceased to shell the whole position not only with shrapnel but with high explosive shells of large calibre, against which the strongest of bombproofs are liable to fail if there is a direct hit.

A Thorn in the Side

The front trenches are now very different from what they were when I last visited them. Every precaution has in fact been taken to render the position impregnable. Every section is self-contained, and unlimited supplies of ammunition are ready at hand.

The spirit of these Colonial troops has been excellent throughout, but they naturally feel sitting still doing nothing day after day far more than regular troops, and it is no secret to say they were getting a bit bored with the hold-up when Liman von Sanders decided on May 18 to make another abortive effort to drive them into the sea, and thus provided, to quote a keen-eyed Bushman, " the finest bit of shooting I ever had."

The presence of the Australians and New Zealanders north of Gaba Tepe is a thorn in the side of the Turks, which handicaps all their operations against our forces in the south of Gallipoli, for whenever he attempts an offensive movement on the south, or is called up to resist

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an attack in force, von Sanders is obliged to leave a very high proportion of his forces facing the Colonials, who, unless they are held in strength, might cut right across his lines of communication. Therefore, as a preliminary measure, before attempting a further offensive agains our forces at the southern end of Gallipoli, von Sanders seems to have made up his mind on a final effort against this position.

Fresh Turkish Troops

For this movement the Germans seem to have brought up from Constantinople at least five fresh regiments, including a *corps d'élite* of picked gendarmes, who wear a light blue uniform of much the same colour as the new French cloth. Von Sanders himself directed the operations which have just ended so disastrously for his prestige. On May 18 various movements of troops were reported by aeroplane reconnaissance and by the ships observing at various points along the coast. Not only was the enemy seen to be disembarking men from steamers in the Straits, but a general movement was reported from north and east of Krithia towards the west.

Further evidence that some new move was meditated was the heavy bombardment opened on the position throughout the 18th, not only from field guns but from 12-inch guns, 9-inch guns, and howitzers. Therefore a warning was sent to the trenches at ten o'clock on the evening of the 18th for every one to be on the *qui vive*.

At midnight a heavy rifle and machine gun fire broke out from the enemy's positions at the head of Monash Gully and from Hill 700, which was chiefly directed on Quinn's Post. This fire was the hottest the Australians have yet known, but the men lay low in their trenches, and suffered but few casualties. Under cover of this

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fire a line of snipers crept forward from the Turkish trenches close up to our front line, and attempted to snipe the defenders. When the latter replied to this fusillade, more Turks crept forward, until a thick line was established within very close range.

These groups offered a splendid target to the Colonials when they surged forward to the assault shortly after three a.m. This attack from the top of Monash Gully was repulsed with heavy loss by four a.m.

Enemy's Fierce Attacks

A series of attacks against various points were now delivered, being directed with special severity against Quinn's and Courtenay's Posts, but these faded away beneath our rifle fire, delivered at close range, piles of dead being left in front of the trenches.

At five a.m. on the 19th, as soon as it was light, the Turks opened up a very heavy bombardment on our trenches, the beach, and the interior of the position, bringing into action 12-inch, 9·2's, howitzers and field guns. From six a.m. until 9.30 a.m. the Turks made a serious of desperate attacks against Quinn's and Courtenay's Posts, but the Colonial line never yielded, and not a Turk ever set foot inside the trenches, although hundreds lie dead within a few yards—some even on the edge of the parapet.

By ten a.m. the enemy began to give way and to retire under a deadly fire from our field guns and howitzers, which inflicted terrible losses, and the enemy retired to their trenches, unable to face the rifle and machine gun fire any longer.

Throughout the morning the Turks kept up their incessant bombardment and heavy rifle fire; but it was obvious at eleven a.m. that the impetus of the attack had

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failed. At three p.m. there were evidences of a fresh movement, but it came to nothing, and throughout the remainder of the 19th and up to dawn on the 20th the enemy contented himself with an incessant rifle fire and sniping.

There was never a more utter or expensive fiasco than this attack. It was supported by a very heavy artillery fire, and, according to the reports of prisoners, at least 30,000 men were massed against our positions. The Turks attacked bravely enough, and there are signs that they were advancing more under compulsion than with any confidence of success. Our official estimate puts the Turkish losses at 7000 killed and wounded. Judging from the enormous numbers of dead lying in front of the trenches unburied this is most likely an under-estimate, and probably at least one-third of the whole army was wiped out.

Huge Turkish Losses

The ground presents an extraordinary sight when viewed through the trench periscopes. Two hundred yards away, and even closer in places, are the Turkish trenches, and between them and our lines the dead lie in hundreds. There are groups of twenty or thirty massed together, as if for mutual protection, some lying on their faces, some killed in the act of firing; others hung up in the barbed wire. In one place a small group actually reached our parapet, and now lie dead on it, shot at point-blank range or bayoneted. Hundreds of others lie just outside their own trenches, where they were caught by rifles and shrapnel fire when trying to regain them. Hundreds of wounded must have perished between the lines, for it was only on the 21st that the enemy made overtures for an armistice for burying the dead; but up

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to the present this has not been granted owing to the suspicious number of troops in his front trenches.

In places the Turks made four or five separate efforts to charge home, using hand grenades, but they all failed dismally.

A Costly Failure

The effect of this success, achieved at such small cost, on the Australians and New Zealanders has been very great. Hitherto they have been fighting under most difficult conditions, against great odds, and their losses have been heavy, both in the early days and amongst the two brigades which took part in the recent attack against Krithia and Aki Baba. They have seen many of their comrades fall without obtaining the results for which they hoped, and they felt that they had many old scores to wipe out on the enemy ever since. Their revenge has exceeded their utmost expectations, for without having to expose themselves they have wiped out thousands of the enemy.

After the attack General Birdwood took me all round the front lines with him, and it at once became evident that the troops were more contented with themselves and life generally than they have been for a long time past. The men were resting after their exertions of the last few days, lying in their bombproofs consuming large quantities of tinned meat, biscuits, jam—of which they are extremely fond—and tea.

In reply to a question of the general, "How many did you kill?" the answer came, "That I can't say, General; but, look out here, and there are eight acres of them lying around."

Another happy warrior remarked: "You put 'em up for us, General, and we'll shoot all you want."

There are many signs that the moral effect of this

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repulse on the Turks has been very great. They are asking continually for armistices, and are busily digging themselves in as if it were their intention to remain strictly on the defensive. It is not surprising if they become weary of being repeatedly led to the slaughter, or rather driven there by their German masters.

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CHAPTER XII

GRAPHIC STORY OF BRITISH HEROISM

June 30

THE British Army in Gallipoli has just gained a great local tactical success on its left wing, in a battle which lasted nearly all day on June 28. The net result is a gain of a whole mile along the coast, the capture of four lines of Turkish trenches, about 200 prisoners, three mountain guns, an immense quantity of small-arms ammunition and many rifles.

We have, in fact, made good a triangular wedge on our left wing, the total gain being a right-angled triangle, each side of which is about a mile long.

Successes such as this cannot be gained without sacrifice, but our losses, considering our gains, have been comparatively small. This has, in fact, been far the most successful engagement fought on the peninsula, because not only did our infantry on the left carry out the entire programme assigned to them, but they were also able to make good and hold the positions thus won against vigorous Turkish counter-attacks.

Only on the extreme right of our advance were our troops unable to carry all the enemy's trenches after several most gallant assaults had failed, but our front, in spite of this, has been made good by connecting up our advanced trenches on the extreme left with those we won on the right, and the enemy has failed to drive us from our new line and has himself suffered very heavy losses in these abortive night attacks.

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Important Success

This success is still more important when judged by the effect on the morale of our own troops. Our superb infantry, whose courage, endurance and capacity for taking a prolonged hammering surpass anything believable unless actually witnessed on the spot, now feel they have at length got the whip hand of the Turks.

Our success on the 28th is mainly due to the change of tactics adopted and to the enormous improvement in the support afforded by our artillery and to the splendid co-operation between the two arms. The Battle of the Gully Ravine, as it has come to be known, is a classical example of the sectional attack which alone leads to decisive results in modern warfare. That is to say, there was no general advance along the whole line. A section of it was selected. Every available gun was concentrated on the works to be assaulted, and they were battered to pieces or completely smothered by high-explosive shells, whilst the wire in front was cut to pieces by twenty minutes' concentrated shrapnel fire. And thus when our infantry were let loose they were able to walk into some of them almost without opposition, the Turks who were not dead running away or surrendering.

Our left wing has constantly been held up by the strength of the Turkish positions. In the action of June 4 our centre made a most successful advance, but our left wing was unable to gain the ground assigned to it, and we were obliged to abandon much of the ground we had won, at the same time suffering very heavy losses.

Creeping Round Krithia

On June 24 the French, by a most gallant and successful advance, straightened out the line on the right, and now our left wing has done the same thing, so that our

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extreme left is even more advanced than our centre, and we are gradually creeping round the village of Krithia.

This success has had a most inspiriting effect on the whole army, and seems to open up the brightest prospects for the future if only our gunners are kept supplied with an unlimited quantity of ammunition.

The brunt of the fighting fell on the 29th Division, whose deeds in Gallipoli will assure them a place in history only equalled by the Tenth Legion and Wellington's Peninsula veterans; on the gallant Indian Brigade; and on one brigade of the hitherto untested 156th Brigade of the Lowland Division.

It would only be natural to suppose that the 29th Division, which has suffered such losses in officers and men, there being some battalions without a single officer who originally landed on that historic April 25, would have lost a great deal of its fighting efficiency. The battalions have been brought up to strength by drafts of young soldiers from the depôts, and many of the officers are also young, but on June 28 they attacked with a vigour and a dash which could not have been surpassed.

The Lowland Brigade have also come out of their first battle with flying colours, and their success has given them confidence for the future, only marred by the loss of their brigadier. The Indian Brigade also lived up to its high reputation.

Opening of the Action

The action opened at nine a.m. on the 28th by a tremendous bombardment of the Turkish trenches with heavy artillery, the high-explosive shells bursting all over the trenches and throwing up clouds of earth and smoke so that the whole section to be attacked soon

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disappeared from view and looked like one huge furnace. At the same time the cruiser *Talbot*, escorted by five destroyers and a great fleet of trawlers, came out and enfiladed the enemy's trenches from the sea with great effect, being assisted by the fire of the destroyers *Wolverine* and *Scorpion*, which stood close in-shore and themselves came under a heavy fire of shrapnel.

To our land batteries the enemy made but little reply, and throughout the day he was very sparing in the use of field guns, only firing two or three hundred rounds. Twenty minutes later our field batteries opened up with shrapnel against the enemy's wire, which was cut most effectively, especially in front of the —— Battery, R.F.A., which shot with extraordinary skill and success all day, earning the unstinted thanks of our infantry and the General Officer Commanding 29th Division.

The French lent our infantry the assistance of some of their trench mortars. These are deadly weapons which drop bombs containing 30 lb. or 70 lb. of mélinite vertically into the enemy's trenches at short range.

Brilliant Infantry Rushes

At 10.45 a.m., after a final bombardment from all the guns, lasting twenty minutes, our infantry advanced. The trenches about to be assaulted lie on both sides of the famous ravine, which runs up from Gully Beach for several miles inland, and which has caused us so much trouble ever since we landed. The first of these positions is known as Boomerang Fort, on the right of the ravine, and it has already been taken and retaken many times. At 10.45 this work was rushed and captured by the 1st Battalion Border Regiment almost without opposition.

Exactly at eleven a.m. the artillery lengthened their

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range to check any attempt to rush up reinforcements, and at the same moment the King's Own Scottish Borderers, the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, and the South Wales Borderers, of the 87th Brigade, rushed the first two lines of Turkish trenches between Gully Ravine and the sea.

In spite of the terrific bombardment to which they had been subjected the Turkish infantry made an effort to check this advance, but it swept irresistibly forward, many Turks being found buried in the trenches, whilst 100 surrendered. At the same time, on the right of the Gully Ravine, the 4th Battalion Royal Scots and the 7th Battalion Royal Scots, of the Lowland Division, delivered the most spirited attacks, and also captured two lines of Turkish trenches.

A Forward Wave

Two battalions of the same brigade farther to the right met with very heavy opposition, and, suffering severe losses, failed to make good their holding. Nothing seemed able to check our infantry, who, admirably supported by our artillery, which covered their advance, firing a hundred yards ahead of the firing line, swept everything before them on the left.

At 11.30 a.m. the 86th Brigade of the 29th Division, led by the 2nd Battalion Royal Fusiliers, which had hitherto been in reserve, passed right through the two lines of trenches captured by the 88th Brigade, and swept forward in great waves against two more lines in front.

Magnificent Sight

This advance was a magnificent sight, the men never wavering or losing their formations under a heavy artillery and rifle fire. At the same time, the Indian

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Brigade, on the extreme left, moved forward along the cliffs, and reached the green knoll which was our extreme objective. Some companies of the Lancashire Fusiliers advanced to a nullah which runs into Gully Ravine from the north and dug themselves in, thus connecting up the advanced positions with the 86th Brigade.

Throughout the afternoon there was a lull in the engagement, except for a desultory fire from our guns if the enemy showed any signs of massing for a counter-attack, the artillery, in fact, effectively putting a screen behind the Turkish firing lines to prevent his reserves from coming up.

At 5.30 p.m. a further attempt was made to capture the trenches on the right facing Krithia village. Unfortunately this proved unsuccessful.

The great difficulty out here has been to hold captured positions against fierce counter-attacks during the night. The ground is so broken, and provides so much natural cover, that the enemy, who knows every detail of its configuration—which we do not—is able to creep up under cover and retake portions of the trenches with the use of grenades. On the night of the 28th and the morning of the 29th the Turks resorted to their old tactics, but met with no success. Our infantry withstood every attack, and repulsed these efforts with heavy loss.

There was no fighting on the 29th, the enemy being apparently exhausted by his efforts, which enabled our men to make good their positions and to run connecting saps to our positions on the right, thus forming a diagonal line facing the enemy.

On the night of the 30th the enemy advanced against the green knoll along the coast, but his columns were dispersed before they ever reached within striking distance of our trenches by the fire of our destroyers.

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A second attack further to the right met with no better success. Two battalions took part in it, and, by making a skilful use of cover, some of them managed to creep up to within thirty yards of our trenches, but were then annihilated by our infantry.

Since then there have been reports of the enemy massing for a fresh effort, but his infantry show no disposition to advance, being greatly dispirited by the loss of so much ground and their heavy casualties.

A Great Feat of Arms

An examination of the captured Turkish positions proves our victory on the left wing to have been even more decisive than could have been hoped for, considering the enormous strength of the works. The Turk is a splendidly stubborn fighter behind entrenchments, and he has always been an adept in constructing field works, as was proved at Plevna and Kars. Now, with the assistance of German knowledge and science, and working on a ground which provides almost every known natural obstacle to assist the defence, it is a great feat of which any general and any troops may justifiably be proud, to have driven him back for over a mile, capturing *en route* four successive lines of trenches and small forts protected by barbed wire entanglements.

The captured trenches present an extraordinary appearance, of which I shall send a detailed description later. It is sufficient to say that they are smashed by high-explosive shells, and the entanglements have been cut to shreds in places by the shrapnel.

Capture of Munitions

We captured hundreds of rifles and thousands of rounds of small-arms ammunition. Every rifle taken is as good as a prisoner or a dead Turk, because the enemy

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has only a limited number, and in one engagement recently there were troops in the front line armed only with Martinis.

The prisoners captured are a very mixed bag, coming from all parts of the Empire, whilst most of the officers are young and inexperienced, with only a few months' service behind them. They are, as a rule, extraordinarily ignorant of everything which occurs on the peninsula except in their own immediate environment, and one and all tell the same story—namely, that they have been informed over and over again that the Allies kill all their prisoners. Thus, immediately they find themselves treated with the greatest kindness and are well fed, they become eternally grateful to their captors and very communicative, denouncing the war as unjust and impolitic.

Turks Weakening

Having been away from the front for a few weeks it certainly seemed to me that the enemy's powers of resistance have appreciably weakened, and that his spirit is nothing like what it was. This may be due to the tremendous effect of our concentrated artillery fire on a small section of his line, which crushed and smothered the defenders, but I am more inclined to the belief that the Turk is gradually losing faith in the German star, and is becoming more and more dissatisfied with the amount of support he receives from his own artillery.

The very essence of German tactics on these occasions is to cover an infantry advance by an overwhelming fire from every available gun in the particular sector to be assaulted, but on this occasion the Turkish counter-attacks were preceded by a few rounds of ill-aimed shrapnel and nothing more. In consequence, the infantry did not dare to make a move on a big scale during the

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day. They had to wait and try to creep up under cover of darkness without the help of their guns. Many of the prisoners expressed themselves as being very dissatisfied with their artillery; yet others are emphatic in stating that the Army has just received a large fresh supply.

It is dangerous to draw too far-reaching conclusions from outward signs, but it would seem as if the Turkish star has already passed its meridian. A long and bitter struggle may lie ahead, for the Turkish infantry are stubborn fighters and gallant men.

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CHAPTER XIII

THE GULLY RAVINE

July 4

THE successful advance of our left wing on June 28 took place on both sides of what is now universally known as the Gully Ravine, and although our troops made no effort to advance directly up the ravine itself, the fall of the enemy's trenches on either side placed another mile of this valley of death in their hands. I suppose that years from now, when the surviving veterans of this campaign in Gallipoli are gathered round some festive board holding the annual celebration to commemorate the fall of Constantinople, that the name which will be most frequently on their lips, and which will recall to them the most sombre memories, will be the Gully Ravine. Some one described it as "a devil of a place," and that description is not inaccurate. Steaming along the western coast of Gallipoli you would not suspect its existence.

The gully varies in depth, in width, and in security, as you pass up it—in the latter case according to the angle the road occupies towards the enemy's trenches. For although after leaving the seashore it takes a general direction towards the north-east—that is to say, towards Krithia—it twists and turns in a remarkable manner, and at one point you may walk in perfect security behind a bluff, while at another you may catch a stream of bullets from the Turkish trenches in front. The Turks, who know every inch of the ground, formerly fired a tremendous number of shells into the ravine, but of late there has

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been a distinct falling off in the volume of this fire, pointing to a growing shortage of ammunition. Nevertheless, there is quite enough shrapnel bursting about your head, especially when an attack is in progress, for then, in addition to the shells deliberately aimed, you catch a large number of stray ones fired at our batteries, and also thousands of dropping bullets which have missed the trenches in front. The Gully Ravine lies between overhanging craggy hills, which are in places 200 ft. in height, and are covered with a thick green shrub, varied by patches of yellow sandy soil, which seems common to the whole of the southern end of Gallipoli.

Picturesque Scene

But for the grimmer business of war, you would naturally stop and admire the surprising beauty of the scene, which resembles the Highlands in its rugged grandeur. The heat in summer is, however, almost unbearable, because no sea breezes penetrate its depths, and the sun beats down on this war-worn road with pitiless severity. But there is plenty of good water for men and horses, parched by the sun and the sand. These springs are carefully guarded against pollution, and are known and beloved by every thirsty warrior to, or on his way from, the trenches. There are some which, flowing from the interior of the hills, enter the valley in a tiny, trickling stream, clear as crystal and icy cold. Crowds of perspiring, dusty, thirsty men will wait indefinite periods in a long queue, each with his water-bottle in hand, for the privilege of obtaining a draught from one of these springs, which are valued more in Gallipoli than the choicest brand of champagne would be at home.

No wine has, or ever will, taste as good as a glass of icy cold spring-water after you have spent hours in the

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trenches, stooping to avoid the enemy's snipers, cramped by the weight of your kit and the narrowness of these earthen passages in which you live, whilst all day the sun scorches your back and neck, and makes you long for the cool of the evening, when for a few hours these human ovens cool down.

Along the road in every spot sheltered by the overhanging cliffs from the sun you will find hundreds of weary men who have just come from the trenches, and who have flung themselves down to snatch a few hours' sleep whilst they may. They lie there unconscious and indifferent to the shells bursting overhead and the stream of stray bullets which come "sizzing" along. A man drops and is immediately carried to the dressing station, but no one takes the smallest notice or even seeks cover, for prolonged experience has had the effect of making nearly all indifferent or fatalists. In the ravine you are constantly coming upon lonely graves, each marked with a cross and a name, marking the last resting-place of some soldier who has fallen in one of the early engagements, or who has been killed on his way to the front and who has been buried just where he fell.

This last advance, on June 28, placed nearly another mile of the gully in our hands, and every yard we progress it becomes narrower and the hills lower. Who will ever forget the scenes they witnessed in the captured Turkish trenches on either side and in the ravine itself the day after they were taken by our infantry? The first obstacle one came upon was a solid hedge of barbed wire placed right across the gully, fastened to thick stakes of wood, which our engineers were busily engaged in cutting through to open a road for reinforcements and transport beyond. Our troops made no effort on the 28th to pass this way, for they captured the high ground on either side, and the Turks in the ravine were either killed, or

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fled. His positions are invariably filthy, and if the enemy goes through the campaign without some great epidemic he will have undue luck.

Captured Equipment

All the way up that portion of the gully, only twenty-four hours before in the enemy's possession, there is a litter of débris of the camp and of the great fight. Scattered bodies half protruding from the ground, hastily-dug graves, hundreds of rifles and bayonets, some broken, but the majority intact, thousands upon thousands of rounds of ammunition—we made a very big haul indeed in this last engagement—entrenching tools, loaves of bread, soldiers' packs, Turkish letters, a Mullah's praying-stool (a souvenir eagerly sought after), greatcoats and kits, blankets and old sacks, cooking utensils, and firewood, left just where the enemy abandoned them when our gallant infantry broke through at the bayonet's point. Great fires are burning at intervals. They are avoided by all, and give forth a horrid, sickly stench. On these the Turkish dead, who have been hastily collected, are being burnt, for it is all important to get the dead out of the way as quickly as possible in this hot climate.

There is no well-defined road up this portion of the ravine, and you can no longer ride on account of the obstacles and stream of bullets coming from the trenches in front. Every one is on foot, and you come upon the divisional commander and his staff, who are returning from a tour of inspection of the newly occupied trenches. You also pass a continual stream of stretcher-bearers, who have been working without a rest for the last twenty-four hours bringing in our wounded. Our advance has been so successful that they tell you with pride not a man has been left alive lying out in front of the line. They

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are also bringing down our dead to bury them in one of the newly formed little cemeteries.

The place is packed with débris, like the gully. The same awful stench pervades everything, and the flies swarm in millions. In one corner seven Turks, with their rifles across their knees, are sitting together. One man has his arm round the neck of his friend and a smile on his face, as if they had been cracking a joke when death overwhelmed them. All now have the appearance of being merely asleep, for of the seven I only see one who shows any outward injury.

Neat Artillery Work

Peeping carefully over the top of the Boomerang, which is being heavily sniped by irate Turks in the broken gorse and trenches ahead, you see how our infantry forced their way in. The barbed wire has been swept away by the accurate fire of the artillery, twenty minutes before our infantry made their assault. A very neat job the gunners made of it, for the uprights and wire have been cut to shreds, allowing our infantry a free passage, of which they took full advantage. You see a number of our men's rifles, helmets and packs lying about which have not yet been collected. Some of these packs and helmets belong to the wounded and killed, others have been left behind or thrown aside when our men swept forward to the next trench. They will be collected and taken to the ravine, and later claimed by their owners, or kept for other drafts on their way out from home.

It is really extraordinary the amount of articles which you always find scattered over a battlefield. The modern soldier goes into action decked out like a Christmas-tree. At the start they would rather carry any weight than leave any of their precious goods behind. But as they advance, and become more and more weary and hot, and

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find their freedom of movement in these wild rushes hampered, they gradually shake off the superfluous. Also, if you leave your pack lying about, it is a common fate to have it looted by your reserves, for the motto of the soldier in battle is "Everything comes to him who takes." I heard of one regiment which was ordered to leave its packs behind when assaulting the trench in front. They successfully accomplished their task, and another battalion took their place in the trench where they had left their packs. Then this battalion relieved them in the captured trench, and they went back to find all their packs had been carefully "gone through." The men could scarcely be restrained from again advancing to the attack of the trench in front to recapture their property from their own comrades, within a few hundred yards of the enemy! All this débris is carefully collected and sorted after each fight, for when equipment is hard to obtain every article has its value.

Leaving the Boomerang Fort, I next visited the one in front, known as the "Turkey Trot." This was even more formidable in its construction than the other, but fell easily before the splendid dash of our infantry. Like all the other positions, it is full of débris and dead. On going up a deserted sap I suddenly came upon a wounded Turk, lying on his back all by himself, with his chest heaving and his hands clenched above his head. He was muttering to himself—I think, praying—but was too far gone to live much longer. He had been overlooked by the stretcher-bearers, a party of whom were immediately sent to bring him in.

Cheerful Young Soldiers

I then went down again to the gully. Here I came upon masses of our infantry making their way forward to relieve the troops in the front line. The companies, as

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they passed, were being inspected by their brigadier. The men were staggering along in the excessive heat, carrying their heavy loads, supplemented by entrenching tools, empty sandbags, and their rations, but, in spite of their fatigue and the heat, these young soldiers, recruits for the most part, were cheery and full of confidence.

Our soldiers are, indeed, extraordinary. Whatever happens, they never seem to lose their spirits, although constantly exposed to danger, to every kind of hardship, with little sleep for days at a time, and living in an atmosphere the stench of which defies description. Several were discussing the relative merits of tinned beef and tinned mutton; others were regretting that biscuit had been served out that morning instead of bread; others were filling their canteens with tea which was being served out from "dixies" as they passed along; and others were talking of the recent fight. To hear them speak you would tremble for the fate of any of the enemy who fell into their hands, and yet the moment a trench is taken and the enemy holds up his hands those who are not killed in the heat of action are treated with the utmost kindness, and our men will share their precious water and their rations with them.

In the front trench our men are working like bees. Across the head of the gully they are building up a "*tête de pont*" under a continuous fire from the enemy's sharpshooters, whilst others, for whom there was no room in the trench, are calmly sleeping behind, oblivious of everything, just waiting until they should be summoned to resist the expected counter-attack. In this trench warfare units become so mixed in an attack that it is often several days before the new line is accurately known. When you think you have won a trench you may find that the enemy is still holding a portion of it, or that he holds some communicating trench, from which he delivers

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constant bomb attacks. Thus, there is continual fighting for days after a position has been won before it is consolidated and properly held.

Scenes of desperate fighting are plainly visible all around our front line. On a small rise a little to the left lie half a dozen of our men killed in the final advance, who it had been impossible to get at and bury. Right in front a line of khaki figures lie in perfect order only a few yards away, yet the sniping is so heavy that even at night it is almost impossible to bring them in. Further up the ravine are heaps of Turkish dead, piled together, who have fallen in the big counter-attack. In a gorse patch further to the left lie a further large number of the enemy, mixed up with some of our men, for there seems to have been a general mêlée in the open at dawn on the 29th, when our men issued from their trenches and hunted the enemy out of the gorse, killing large numbers of them.

The weary troops, worn out with fighting and digging, are now relieved, and I make my way down the gruesome valley with them. They snatch at the tea which is handed them from the "dixies," and drink it in huge gulps. Tea is the mainstay of our soldiers. They will take any quantity, and it seems to keep them going better than anything else. Thus revived, they pass on down the valley to their billets, and, throwing off their kits, hurl themselves on the ground, and in spite of the shells and bullets, the sand and heat, the stenches, and, above all, the millions of flies, they are no sooner prone than asleep, for they know on the following day, or it may be that same night, they will have to return to their ceaseless vigilance and digging.

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CHAPTER XIV

PRODIGAL WASTE OF LIFE

July 7

THE successful advance of our left wing on June 28 seems to have alarmed the enemy most seriously, and to have caused him grave anxiety for the safety of his right flank. Having brought up fresh troops, some of them raw levies, from Asia, he has been counter-attacking vigorously ever since, making the most desperate but vain efforts to recover the lost trenches.

It is reported that Enver Pasha himself has come down from Constantinople to stimulate the faithful to fresh exertions by his presence, and a great banner was hoisted on Aki Baba, symbolical of his arrival. There are also dissensions in the Turkish camp, for the generals on the spot, who have gained experience of the futility of these massed counter-attacks against entrenched British infantry and under a superior artillery fire, were opposed to any attempt to recover the lost ground, arguing that it would be better to strengthen the trenches to which they have fallen back, and there to wait our fresh advance.

ENVER'S OBSTINACY

But Enver Pasha would not hear of it. He insisted on a general attack along the whole of our line, and it is

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said that some thirty fresh battalions were engaged in this move.

It is impossible to give a detailed account of these various attacks, which have generally been delivered at night or at early dawn. The enemy has been particularly severely handled on our left wing, where he was caught not only by our field guns and heavy howitzers, but also by the enfilading fire of the destroyers. In fact, his massed advances have simply faded away before our artillery and the accurate fire of our infantry, who have suffered a minimum of loss in resisting these abortive efforts.

British repulse Attacks

In our centre and on our right wing the Turks have on occasions sapped up close, and have fought on more even terms, but not in one single instance have they been able to maintain a lodgment in our trenches. Their artillery, which was so very inactive on June 28, has apparently received fresh supplies of ammunition, and has fired a large number of rounds—for the Turks—in the last three days. The effect of this fire has been practically nil.

The Asiatic batteries have also been very active, and both V Beach and Lancashire Landing have been having a very hot time, but except for causing general annoyance to the working parties, the casualties have been very few, because every one is now too well dug-in to suffer any harm except from direct hits.

Turkish Gallantry

All our officers are loud in their praises of the extreme gallantry and indifference to death shown by the Turkish

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infantry. Superlative as he has proved himself to be in defence, his methods in attack are crude and wasteful, for he possesses no knowledge of carrying out scientifically an assault such as our infantry do, supported by their artillery. If he is entrenched close to our front lines the Turk is clever at sapping and in the use of bombs, of which he possesses a large supply, but when he has to advance over the open and carry our positions at the point of the bayonet, he invariably is beaten back with enormous loss.

Before an attack he masses several battalions in any natural features of the ground under cover and hidden from view, and then this mass surges forward in no regular formation, advancing slowly and without any apparent enthusiasm for the task.

Often our artillery are informed of these concentrations before the attack is launched, and, knowing the range to a foot, they break up the gathering before it ever has a chance of leaving cover. Sometimes a few of the bravest and most determined reach our parapets, only to be shot down, but the majority scatter, leaving large numbers of snipers in the broken ground, who cause most of our casualties.

Enemy's Great Losses

The net result of their efforts to recapture the lost ground has been to cause the Turks an enormous number of killed and wounded during the past week. All along our lines the dead are lying in hundreds. Large numbers we cannot see on account of the configuration of the ground, and thousands of wounded are reported to have arrived in Constantinople.

The exact figures cannot be stated, but they must

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number quite 10,000 killed and wounded, and possibly many more.

Under these circumstances, Enver's intervention has been a singularly happy inspiration from our standpoint. As a general he has always proved himself beneath contempt, as was clearly shown by the unparalleled disasters which the armies led by him suffered in the Caucasus. Possibly his activity is only temporary, and he has taken the opportunity of General von Sanders' wound to try his methods of driving us into the sea.

The very heavy losses which the Turks have suffered during the past eight days, and the reckless manner in which they have thrown away thousands of lives points to their having an unlimited number of troops in the peninsula. In fact, it would seem as if we are fighting the entire Turkish army, which has been withdrawn from the other fronts and concentrated in Thrace and Gallipoli. The successful offensive of the Germans and Austrians in Galicia and Poland has probably enabled Enver to denude Armenia, for the enemy has certainly been very prodigal of life in the last few days.

New Turkish Trenches

From captured orders it is evident that the Turkish commanders are much worried over the facility with which we have taken their trenches in our last two advances. Most drastic steps are being adopted to prevent a repetition of this in the future, for the men are strictly forbidden to retire, and their officers have orders to shoot them if they do, and any officer who refuses to shoot his men is to be shot himself. This order, sent round by one of the divisional commanders, has to be signed by all the officers of battalions, who undertake to carry out the instructions contained therein.

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Meanwhile the Turks have constructed four new lines of trenches of great strength in front of our left wing, whilst they are daily digging all around Aki Baba and Krithia, and have turned the plain beyond it, between Aki Baba and the Kilid Bahr plateau, into a regular fortress.

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CHAPTER XV

BATTLE OF JULY 12–13

July 14

As a result of two days' severe fighting our line has gained considerable ground.

On July 12 a brigade, after a terrific bombardment lasting one hour, successfully advanced, capturing a strong redoubt and several lines of trenches on the left.

On the right a brigade took two lines of trenches, and obtained a lodgment in a third, but were driven out, holding the first two.

During the night of July 12–13 bitter hand-to-hand fighting took place in the trenches and saps, the Turks counter-attacking vigorously, and the brigade were forced to evacuate some advanced trenches.

In the afternoon of the 13th the attack was reorganised.

At 4.30 p.m., after a further bombardment, a general assault was delivered. In conjunction with the French our infantry on the left swept irresistibly forward, recapturing all the evacuated trenches, and advancing a considerable distance beyond. The Turks fled in disorder.

On the right two lines of trenches were again taken, but the attack was held up at the third. The result was that a whole section of the enemy's line was captured and consolidated on the left, but on the right the attack was only partly successful.

Enormous Obstacles

This success has only been achieved after desperate fighting. Any one who has not seen the ground can

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have no conception of the obstacles our heroic infantry have to face in gaining even a few yards of fresh soil in Gallipoli.

In the last three months the Turks have constructed a perfect network of trenches and small redoubts, all protected by barbed wire and connected by saps and communicating trenches.

They have now realised that no infantry can withstand these tremendous bombardments with high-explosive shells concentrated on a small section of the defence. Therefore they withdraw most of their men down the communicating trenches whilst the bombardment lasts, and our infantry are thus able to occupy two or three lines with but small loss, but the majority of our casualties occur in holding the trenches after they have been won. For the enemy, knowing the ground and the plan of their trenches better than our men, attack them with bombs through the saps, and the fighting takes place at close quarters.

Parties of men get too far forward and are frequently lost for hours, whilst it is no uncommon occurrence for our men to gain possession of an advanced trench whilst the Turks are still holding sections of those behind them.

"Brutal Bludgeon Work"

Thus after each advance it takes a long time to straighten out and consolidate a captured position. The cost of this particular kind of warfare can be worked out with almost mathematical exactness, for so many men must be sacrificed, so many shells fired, and so many grenades are required for every fresh hundred yards of ground occupied.

It is bludgeon work, brutal and unattractive, and giving little or no scope for skill in tactics or strategy.

But in front of Aki Baba the situation is exactly the

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same as it is before Ypres or in the zone of the French operations before Souchez. Victories cannot be won in a day here any more than they can be in France.

The Territorials have had many opportunities of proving their merit on the peninsula, and have come out of the fiery ordeal with a greatly enhanced reputation. For, once they have been given time to settle down and and have become accustomed to the novel conditions, they have proved themselves to be in most instances first-class fighting men, possessing great intelligence and great dash, worthy to fight side by side with a Division such as the famous 29th.

At dawn on the 12th, after a heavy bombardment, the brigade on the right assaulted and captured two lines of Turkish trenches and reached a third, where they failed to establish themselves and were driven out, and we failed to establish a *liaison* with the French on our right.

Throughout the day our heavy guns were busy registering on the enemy's positions, and at four p.m. a terrible bombardment was opened on the left of this section of his line where it touches the Aki Baba nullah.

The Turkish positions looked appallingly strong.

In addition, on their right, overlooking the nullah, the Turks held a regular rectangular redoubt perched on the edge of the ravine, down which he had concealed machine guns. At four p.m. every available gun was turned on the enemy's trenches and on the redoubt, hundreds of high-explosive shells falling into the trenches and saps and throwing up great masses of earth, sandbags, and wooden beams to an immense height. It was an extraordinary sight, and it did not seem possible for any infantry to live under such a fire. But I fancy the majority had been withdrawn down the communicating trenches.

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During this bombardment our infantry lay low and not a man was visible.

Exactly at five p.m. our guns lengthened their fuses and concentrated on the enemy's reserve trenches and on any dead ground where he might be massing his reserves for a counter-attack, and a warship bombarded the observation station on the top of Aki Baba with 12-in. shells, which was most valuable in upsetting his arrangements for directing the operations.

Picture from the Inferno

At the same moment, as if animated by a common will, the regiments of the brigade leapt from their trenches and surged forward towards the great redoubt and the network of saps and trenches.

The whole scene resembled some picture from the Inferno, for our guns, shelling the works behind, made a great background of earth and smoke; whilst no sooner did our advance become apparent than the enemy's batteries, which had been keeping very quiet, opened upon our infantry with shrapnel and high explosives, smothering his own works which we were about to enter.

The ground resembled a gigantic steaming cauldron, into whose thick vapours the gallant brigade poured without once hesitating or looking back. Individuals soon became swallowed up in the mist, and all you could see were black dots rushing about or jumping into the trenches with bayonets flashing in the shrouded sun amidst a continuous roar of musketry, which showed that the Turks were resisting valiantly.

But when the smoke lifted somewhat our men were everywhere in possession of the enemy's trenches.

For a few minutes it looked as if the redoubt might

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give some trouble, but the Scots never gave the Turks a chance, swarming up the escarpment on all sides, and jumping in on top to settle the argument with the bayonet.

For an hour and a half parties of Turks held out at various points and the fighting was continuous and furious, but our artillery made such a curtain of shrapnel that his reserves never had a chance of counter-attacking. Thus at sunset on the 12th the brigade had captured all the works assigned to it on the left, but on the right they had been forced to evacuate two lines of captured trenches.

"A Great Day"

Nevertheless it had been a great day for these soldiers, who in spite of the extreme heat and the difficult task had fought like veterans.

It was impossible to see what was happening, but throughout the night of the 12th and the 13th the rifle fire hardly ever ceased, and at dawn it rose into a crescendo.

The Turks, bringing up reinforcements, attacked our weary men through the communication trenches with bombs and bayonets. The kilted troops fought gallantly, but could not maintain all the ground they had won on the previous afternoon. They were driven out of two lines of trenches, but never lost their hold on the redoubt. The enemy's losses were heavy,

When day broke on the 13th the Staff were able to examine accurately the position and to count what sections of the enemy's line we still held and what had been lost. It was decided to give him no rest, but to follow up with another attack. For this purpose the two brigades exhausted by twenty-four hours' continuous

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fighting were withdrawn from the front trenches and the Naval Division was moved up.

At four p.m. on the 13th our Field Artillery opened up once again on the battered shambles of trenches, now knocked almost out of recognition. A high wind was blowing, and the bursting shrapnel threw up immense clouds of dust, which hid the horizon from view.

Infantry's Dash

At 4.30 our right moved forward amidst a terrible rifle fire, regaining the two trenches taken on the previous day, but again being held up by a third and fourth. They then moved more to the right and advanced a long distance, skirting the enemy's works without being able to enter them.

For nearly three hours this fighting continued on the right, hidden partly from view and no one knowing exactly what was happening. But the attack on our left was completely successful. It was conducted with the utmost skill and dash, and our infantry simply swept over everything in their front, bayoneting those Turks who did not succeed in escaping down the saps.

Having carried everything assigned to them there was no stopping our infantry, who swept forward in small parties, often in twos and threes as if they would never stop, in spite of the shell and heavy rifle fire. At one time it looked as if they intended to assault a fresh position behind on a low hill, but fortunately this further advance, which would have been premature, was checked in time.

The Turks seemed thoroughly demoralised on our left by this final charge, and fled a long way back to the foot of Aki Baba, pursued by our shells.

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At sunset on the 13th the whole of the enemy's left was in our possession, and was firmly consolidated during the night, but on the right, in spite of every effort, we could not take the last two lines of works, but remained in possession of the two first, which were also consolidated, and that is how the position stands at present.

We were opposed by three of the best Turkish regiments, and have captured some 500 prisoners. Our infantry fought splendidly, and our artillery rendered most efficient support.

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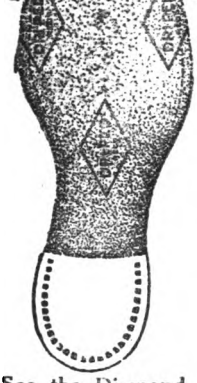

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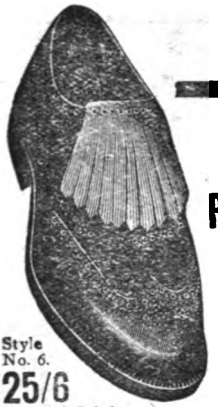

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